DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 953 CS 214 199

AUTHOR Wong, Sau-ling; Zou, John
TITLE The Writing of Non-English Background Students--Part 2: The Study of the Chinese-Background Students. Final Report.
INSTITUTION National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy, Berkeley, CA.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Dec 93
CONTRACT R117G10036
NOTE 143p.; For part 1 of this study (dealing with Latino students), see CS 214 198.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Achievement Gains; Case Studies; Chinese Americans; *Educational Background; *English (Second Language); Junior High Schools; Junior High School Students; Language Proficiency; *Limited English Speaking; Non English Speaking; *Second Language Learning; *Writing Achievement; *Writing Improvement; Writing Instruction; Writing Research
IDENTIFIERS California (San Francisco Bay Area); *Chinese Speaking; Writing Development

ABSTRACT

A study investigated the writing of incipient bilinguals (students who were in the initial process of acquiring a second language). A total of four Chinese-speaking children were chosen for final, in-depth study over a 2-year period at a middle school in the San Francisco Bay Area in California. Data included initial interviews and observations, assessments of English language proficiency, classroom and school observations, written products produced inside and outside of school, and interviews with students and school personnel. Results indicated that: (1) the students encountered problems in adjustment and language learning shared with other immigrant students, but also faced complex challenges peculiar to their own age bracket of 12- to 14-year-olds; (2) the students' native-language proficiency could be considerably more advanced than was generally recognized; (3) the English language development of the students proceeded very unevenly, contradicting the widespread notion that English development proceeds in a listening-speaking-reading-writing sequence; (4) students' writing products showed that considerable problems with English morphology and syntax coexisted with highly developed organizational and cognitive skills; (5) writing instruction based on audiolingual-type assumptions about the nature of language learning had an inhibitory if not retarding effect on some students' writing; (6) extremely high motivation to learn English coexisted with high motivation to associate with fellow Chinese speakers; and (7) at the end of two years, all students made some progress, but all were far from exhibiting native-like control of English. (Fourteen figures of students' writing and drawings are included.) (RS)

ERIC

ED 366 953

FINAL REPORT

THE WRITING OF NON-ENGLISH BACKGROUND STUDENTS

Part 2: The Study of the Chinese-Background Students

Sau-ling Wong
John Zou

University of California at Berkeley

December, 1993

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Project Directors: Guadalupe Valdés and Sau-ling Wong

CS214199

NOTE: The research reported herein was supported under the Educational Research and Development Center Program (Grant No. R117G10036 for the National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy) as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. The findings and opinions expressed in this report do not reflect the position or policies of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement or the U.S. Department of Education.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE WRITING OF NON-ENGLISH-BACKGROUND STUDENTS

Final Report

Part 2
The Study of the Chinese-Background Students

CHOICE OF SCHOOL SITE

Cooperville Junior High, part of the Cooperville School District, is located in the southern part of the greater Bay Area, in an affluent suburban community called Sandy Valley. Sandy Valley is the northern neighbor of a similar though more affluent suburb, Cooperville, that gave the name to the school district. Cooperville Junior High's students are drawn from Sandy Valley, Cooperville, and other nearby communities.

The choice of Cooperville Junior High for studying Chinese-speaking immigrant students, as with other ethnographic projects of this nature, was determined by several factors. Personal and institutional relationships are relatively arbitrary factors that are, however, crucial for gaining access; these include the investigators' prior networking with School District personnel and their ability to establish rapport with them and obtain permission to conduct the study. Secondly, the school must have a large enough number of students with the desired language background from whom one could select focal students. The school's physical distance from the investigator's and research assistant's home institutions must be taken into account, as an inconvenient site would severely limit the frequency of one's interactions with the focal students and opportunities for observation. Last but not least, even though a small-scale qualitative study must be extremely cautious about extrapolating from its findings, if the site is located in a community that embodies certain patterns in the changing Chinese American population in the Bay Area (if not the state), there would be more potential for raising provocative questions about language learning.

In view of these factors, the choice of Cooperville Junior High represented a compromise. Ideally, if the Spanish- and Chinese-speaking immigrant students could be studied in the same school, the opportunities for comparisons and contrasts would be much richer. However, because of local demographic characteristics that are, in no small measure, a reflection of the relative socioeconomic positions occupied by the two groups in American society, the prospective school with a large Spanish-speaking population was short on Chinese speakers, and vice versa. Thus, after initial inquiries, the project co-directors had to reluctantly give up the idea of studying the two groups in the same school.

Cooperville Junior High's location is also less than ideal. Situated on the northern edge of Sandy Valley, it is about 1-1/4 hours' drive (on a good day) from UC Berkeley, the home institution of the project's personnel; as a result, each visit was a major operation. The research assistant John Zou, a graduate student with his

own class schedule to work around, often lost a considerable amount of observation time because of these long trips. He was also unable to "hang out" with the focal students in an informal way. The physical distance played a part in limiting the amount of data obtained for the Chinese-speakers' portion of the project. This in turn created a problem for any comparison with the Spanish-speakers' data, which were gathered through much more frequent site visits and were much more voluminous. (During a substantial part of the study, Professor Valdés, the principal investigator for the Spanish-speakers, worked from her mid-Peninsula home, which was only 20 minutes or so from her selected site. After some of her focal students transferred to other schools nearby, she continued to follow them individually.)

On the other hand, the Cooperville School District was one with which Professor Valdés, a much more experienced and better known researcher than Wong on language education issues, had established good relationships before. This greatly facilitated the permission-obtaining process by Wong and Zou. The convenience of being able to save time and energy gaining access was more than enough to outweigh the above two disadvantages.

More importantly, Cooperville Junior High is significant for studying Chinese-speaking immigrant students because of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the communities it serves. The choice of this school, though not determined entirely by "rational" factors, does afford a good glimpse into a new kind of Chinese immigrant experience distinct from the older, Chinatown-centered type with which many California educators are already familiar. The concentration of Chinese immigrants in suburban Sandy Valley and similar surrounding communities is a fairly recent phenomenon. It is traceable to both changes in immigration laws and the rise of Silicon Valley as a national and international center for the electronics industry.

As is well known, after early Chinese immigrant labor helped build the transcontinental railroad and open up the West, the Chinese were singled out for almost total exclusion from immigration in 1882. Exclusion was repealed in 1943, but even so only 105 Chinese were allowed into the United States per year. In 1965, the immigration policy in effect since 1924, which had favored Northwestern European national origins at the expense of Asian and Latin American ones, was changed to create a flat quota of 20,000 per country. As a result of this liberalization, Chinese immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong began coming in large numbers. Among them are many middle-class students and educated professionals, as well as people with portable capital to settle with and invest. Many of these immigrants have been able to bypass the previously common pattern of an immigrant family living and working in an urban Chinatown upon landing, then moving on to the suburbs when its economic situation improves; settling directly in a suburb has become a new trend. The growing presence of Chinese immigrants in the Sandy Valley area can be traced to the post-1965 influx in general.

In 1980, after a long hiatus, direct immigration from mainland China was permitted again. When the Communist regime came to power on the mainland in 1949, the U.S. government decided to recognize only the Nationalist regime on Taiwan and cut off diplomatic relations with the former, not resuming it until 1979.

Upon formal recognition of the Communist regime, another immigration quota of 20,000 was added, in effect doubling the quota for Chinese. Already-established Chinese population centers are often chosen by the newer mainland immigrants as well, either because of resumed family connections or because of the convenience and opportunities they offer to newcomers. The area surrounding Sandy Valley, with its many amenities, is a popular destination. All this recent history is reflected in the fact that the Chinese-speaking students observed in Cooperville Junior High are from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the mainland and speak a variety of dialects.

In addition to changes in immigration legislation, the rise of the electronics industry in the region that came to be known as Silicon Valley during the early 1970s has also contributed to the increasing numbers and visibility of Chinese immigrants in Cooperville. Stanford University nearby, and UC Berkeley further north, have been attracting a large number of students of science and technology from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and later mainland China. Upon leaving school, many of these are directly absorbed into the electronics industry in Silicon Valley, either as technical professionals or (more rarely) as entrepreneurs. They then settle in the suburbs in the vicinity. Their presence and success in turn cause more Chinese immigrants to converge on Silicon Valley. The educated Chinese immigrants' high income levels mean an impressive buying power; many businesses catering to them have sprung up to tap this buying power, including upscale Chinese restaurants, specialty grocery stores, and video rental outlets. In addition to the educated, less skilled Chinese immigrants are also attracted to Silicon Valley because many jobs in electronics, such as assembly, do not require much English-language ability; the large number of businesses serving Chinese customers are also a source of employment suitable for newcomers.

In this context, Sandy Valley and its neighbors represent a new type of Chinese immigrant experience of which an urban, ghettoized Chinatown is no longer an adequate symbol. Certainly the pre-1965 pattern continues to exist, many Chinatowns across the country have been revitalized by recent immigration, and sometimes "new" or "secondary" Chinatowns have formed in the same cities as the "historic" ones, such as the Richmond district in San Francisco. However, the type of affluent suburban community with a high concentration of middle-class Chinese (and generally Asian) immigrants—represented by Sandy Valley and Cooperville, or by Monterey Park in Southern California which is the subject of a recent book-length study (Timothy Fong, *The First Suburban Chinatown* [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993])—is increasingly common. A sound understanding of Chinese immigrant students in today's schools must be based on an awareness that the foreign-born Chinese American population is increasingly diverse in terms of place of origin, dialect, socioeconomic background, educational level, occupational and settlement patterns, and cultural practices. Stereotypical images of Chinese immigrants as isolationist Chinatown dwellers, Cantonese-speakers, non-Western educated menial laborers, etc., can no longer capture the complexities of today's Chinese immigrants.

This is especially true now that the economic ascendancy of Asia, including Chinese-dominated areas like Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (three of the much-touted "Little Dragons"), has modified a long-standing concept of

immigration as a permanent and irreversible venture into an alien land out of economic necessity. (Political instability in Chinese-speaking regions has, of course, continued to encourage emigration to the U.S.) In the global context, the relative positions occupied by the U.S. and Chinese-speaking regions in Asia have shifted, leading to a greater recognition of the Chinese language as a potentially useful economic asset for Americans. One sign of this change in language attitudes is that in Spring 1994, after years of lobbying by Asian American educators, the first-ever SAT test in Chinese will be given. Furthermore, technological advances have made communication (both physical and informational) between the U.S. and Asia much easier and cheaper than before; obviously, this would affect the identity formation and language acquisition and maintenance patterns of Chinese immigrants. The new social, economic, political, and cultural realities outlined above require American educators to reconsider their understanding of who their Chinese immigrant students are and what they are like.

While the modest study completed at Cooperville Junior High cannot hope to shed copious light on contemporary Chinese immigrant students in general, it should be emphasized that it is crucial for educational researchers not to confine their future inquiries to the "classic" Chinatown-based youngsters in urban schools. The focal students in this study, being mostly from professional families, are relatively free from the disadvantages that are often cited as causing the English problems of Chinatown-based immigrant students. These include residential isolation, non- or limited-English-speaking parents, a large Chinese-speaking peer group in the schools, and poor funding and staffing of ESL programs. In future investigations, the English learning of these focal students might be contrasted with the English learning of their Chinatown-based counterparts, in order to tease apart developmental issues from instructional and social-contextual ones.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE SCHOOL SITE

Cooperville Junior High, serving 7th and 8th grade, is a mid-sized school with 810 students at the time this study began, and 35 teachers, of whom 7 were new. It is one of four junior high schools in the district.

According to official literature distributed at the school district administrative office, at the time the study began in 1991, Cooperville Unified School District served a student population of 12,400 in a 26-square mile area including Cooperville and portions of five nearby communities. It has 18 elementary schools (K-6) and four junior high schools (7-8). The ethnic breakdown for the student population was:

Black	2.0%
Hispanic	4.0%
Asian	28.0%
Other	66.0%

The average class size was 29, and the state revenue limit per student was $2,919.72.

Cooperville Unified School District has an excellent reputation in the state. It has received recognition at both the state and national levels in the California State Distinguished Schools Program and the United States Department of Education Elementary and Secondary School Recognition Program. Its official literature proudly points out that its students sometimes outperform those from wealthier districts. Historically, the district ranks among the top 3% of California elementary schools. As for junior high, the following are the 8th grade scores on the 1989-90 California Assessment Program (CAP) statewide test, for the four schools within the district; the scores are percentiles based on comparison with all the schools in California:

Junior High	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	History
Cooperville	89	94	97	95	96
Hill	95	91	95	96	92
Kenneth	98	97	98	97	98
Michaels	97	98	97	98	98

The entire district's statewide percentile ranks for the 8th grade level are: 96 for Reading, 97 for Essay, 98 for Math, 98 for Science, and 98 for History. These are, obviously, most impressive scores.

In the real estate section of Chinese-language newspapers serving immigrants, such as *World Journal* and *Sing Tao Daily*, the location of a house in the Cooperville Unified School District is prominently advertised as a selling point. (Wong knows of immigrant parents, from both Taiwan and Hong Kong, who arrived already armed with information about the desirable school districts and the students' scores on standardized tests.)

The communities served by Cooperville Junior High School are well- to-do. Sandy Valley, whose population was over 117,000 according to the 1990 Census, boasted a 1989 per capita income of $22,309; for the smaller Cooperville, population over 40,000, the 1989 per capita income was $29,118. The 1989 median family income was $53,081 for Sandy Valley; as high as $70,671 for Cooperville. The median home price was $332,700 for Sandy Valley; $414,300 for Cooperville.

Cooperville Junior High is located next to a freeway interchange, but noise from the freeways is buffered by an athletic field and sound walls recently built with state funds. Surrounding the school are quiet, tree-lined residential streets of older, mostly ranch-style houses, modest by Bay Area standards (expensive elsewhere!) but well kept up. The school grounds are spacious and clean. Buildings are one-story, flat-roofed boxes linked by covered walkways. "The quad," an open-air space in the center of the buildings, is where students congregate during breaks. Normal wear and tear expected of any heavily-used public building is in evidence, but on the whole, the physical appearance of Cooperville Junior High evinces an air of being prosperous and well-run.

Suburban as it was, Cooperville Junior High was not entirely exempt from problems of discipline and sometimes petty crime that plague American public schools. For example, once a Mexican-American student used Mace on a few

classmates, who had to be sent to the hospital emergency room. Another time the school had to warn students over the PA system not to temper with cars in the parking lot, as there had been several bad accidents associated with such tempering. Nevertheless, on the whole Cooperville Junior High presented students with a safe, sheltered, and reasonably maintained environment for learning.

FOCAL STUDENT SELECTION; GAINING ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL AND THE STUDENTS

In selecting Chinese-speaking focal students, the issue of dialect must first be decided. Cantonese and Mandarin are the major dialect groups among Chinese immigrants in the Bay Area. Immigrant students from Hong Kong are overwhelmingly native Cantonese speakers. Few of them are Mandarin-speaking; it is only very recently that some Hong Kong schools have started to teach Mandarin, in preparation for Hong Kong's reversion to the People's Republic of China in 1997. Immigrant students from mainland China may come from a variety of native dialect backgrounds, but since Mandarin is the national language and the medium of instruction in the schools, they are all Mandarin-speaking. For similar reasons (though operating under a different regime), immigrant students from Taiwan are Mandarin-speaking. This is true even if they come from Taiwanese families with strong nativist sentiments that insist on using the Taiwanese dialect at home. ("Mainlander" in Taiwan, as opposed to native Taiwanese, are those who fled across the Taiwan Strait when the Communists took power in 1949. The relationship between the two groups has been complex, often vexed.)

The researchers had a choice between Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking students. The decision was to select only Mandarin speakers. The major reason for doing so was that the research design stipulated focal students entering at "as close to zero English as possible," and it seemed more likely to find students from the Chinese mainland or Taiwan fitting this description than those from Hong Kong. Hong Kong has a British colonial educational system; English-medium schools are common and strongly preferred by parents; and until the 1970s, when Chinese was added, English was the sole official language. On the whole, Hong Kong is a more Westernized society than Taiwan or the mainland. Thus, while the status and reach of the English language have been rapidly growing on the mainland since the People's Republic opened up, and while Taiwan is also Westernized in many ways, on the whole it is safe to assume that Hong Kong immigrant students tend to come in with more prior exposure to English than those from the other two areas.

Of the two researchers on the Chinese portion of this project, Wong is a native Cantonese speaker from Hong Kong who, on the basis of a couple of years of Mandarin instruction early in elementary school, learned to function in conversational Mandarin by interacting with Taiwan students after coming to the United States. She can function in everyday settings in Mandarin but falls far short of native proficiency and has a noticeable Cantonese accent. Zou is a multidialectal native Shanghainese who was educated on the mainland before coming to the United States and thus can be considered to have native proficiency in Mandarin. If a better Mandarin speaker had not been available, Wong could still have conducted

the research in Mandarin, albeit with considerable effort. However, since a common dialect background is so essential to gaining the focal students' trust, given Zou's native proficiency, the decision was made early on for Wong to phase herself out as the primary data gatherer.

As it turned out, this proved to be a wise choice. It was later found that maintaining a sense of their Chinese identity was crucial to the focal students' adjustment to their immigrant situation, and that the ability to deploy dialect skillfully was in turn crucial to their negotiations of "Chineseness." Thus it would have been counter-productive for data-gathering if one of the two researchers—in fact, the older and more authoritative one in terms of institutional rank—had been regarded with disdain for her imperfect Mandarin. The students might not have been as forthcoming and uninhibited, and some of the subtleties in their Mandarin output might have been missed by Wong. (However, as it also turned out, nativist sentiments among the Taiwanese students and attachment to the Taiwanese dialect were strong, so that Mandarin, in some contexts, remained for them a "language of power" rather than "language of solidarity." This is something that the researchers did not anticipate.)

After the decision on dialect was made, Wong set out to gain access to Cooperville Junior High, which from initial inquiries was determined to have enough Mandarin-speakers for the study. As mentioned above, the arrangement to conduct the Chinese portion of the project in Cooperville Junior High was initially made by project co-director Professor Valdés, who had met the Superintendent of the Cooperville Unified School District earlier and secured her interest in the project. The Superintendent expressed this interest to Dr. Sarah Stetson, the Curriculum Coordinator of the School District, who then met a couple of times with Wong to help her narrow down a pool of prospective focal students and smooth the way for meeting the school site personnel.

Wong made an appointment to visit Mr. Vince Akers, the principal of Cooperville Junior High. Mr. Akers was congenial and helpful. (Later Zou learned that he seemed to have some special feeling for the Chinese; he mentioned once that his father was born on a battleship in Tianjing, a main port in Northern China.) Upon Mr. Akers's approval of the project, Wong met with him again together with the three ESL teachers, Mr. Hinton, Mrs. Fielding, and Mrs. Garcia, to explain the purposes and format of the study and to gain the teachers' trust. (Mrs. Garcia did not exclusively teach ESL classes; she also taught regular English.) At both meetings, Wong summarized the main points of the project proposal, emphasizing that the study was of writing development in a small number of focal students and not meant to be an evaluation of the school's ESL program or of the teachers' performance. Wong began observing Mr. Hinton's classes and getting to know the instructor and his aides, Sandra Baxter (Taiwanese- and Mandarin-speaking) and Donna Trevor, as well as the prospective subjects for the study. By examining some of the prospective subjects' ESL scores, and by drawing upon the informal assessments of Sandra Baxter, a Mandarin-speaker from Taiwan who worked closely with the Chinese-speaking students, Wong selected the focal students. Then she brought in Zou and introduced him to the relevant personnel. After a couple more

visits, Zou took over and became the main gatherer of data throughout the two years of the study.

To explain the process of focal student selection in greater detail: Wong, with the permission and assistance of Dr. Sarah Stetson, went through files of student data in the school district office to select those with Chinese surnames, origins in Taiwan or the mainland, recent arrival dates, low placement scores, and 7th grade level. This step yielded eight potential focal students. Armed with this list of names, Wong then consulted the aide in Mr. Hinton's class, Sandra Baxter, to choose those with "as close to zero English as possible."

The language profiles for three of the focal students were described as follows in a computer printout generated by Dr. Sarah Stetson from school district data. Each student's language data was recorded on a Limited English Proficient Program Articulation Card, but the researchers did not have access to these cards directly.

Name	Oral	Writing	Reading	First language
Audrey So	1	None	None	Above average
John Sun	1	None	None	Above average
Martin Zhang	1	None	None	Below average

Time spent in the U.S. at the time of testing was: two months for Audrey So; two weeks for John Sun; and two months for Martin Zhang. Another, Samuel Feng, had scores and arrival times similar to the above three and was considered. However, Sandra Baxter identified John Sun and Martin Zhang as being "closer to zero English," so Samuel Feng was later dropped. One student from Taiwan, Jay Yan, who showed the surprising pattern of testing as "Level 1" for oral, "None" for Reading, and "Level 4" for writing was briefly considered for the study, but was dropped when it was found that his arrival in the U.S. was over a year ago.

A fourth focal subject, Matt Chang, was added a little later to the study, in early November. He had been in the U.S. for two weeks at that time. Sandra Baxter pointed him out as a prospective subject. Wong obtained data about his personal background from his card in the classroom, but not comparable data from the school district on his placement levels. However, on the back of his card where he copied his schedule, there were a number of errors indicative of "close to zero English" in the written area. (These will be described in the discussion of his writing development.)

Native language proficiency was determined solely by a parent's or guardian's report. For years now Cooperville Junior High has had Spanish-speaking personnel to conduct assessment of native-language proficiency after a student has taken the English tests and found to be NEP or LEP. However, there was no corresponding Chinese-speaking personnel until the school year after the study was concluded, i.e., Fall 1993 (Mandarin speaker). Interestingly, whereas the parent's or guardian's assessments for John Sun and Audrey So were "Above average," that for Martin Zhang was "Below average." The latter negative judgment was at odds with Zou's sense of Martin Zhang's command of Chinese, which he considered to be quite

advanced; nor did it fit well with the fact that back in Shanghai Martin attended one of the city's most selective schools.

Oral proficiency is determined by the IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test, which is divided into six levels of proficiency, from A to F. A student who passes one level moves on to the next, until he/she exceeds a certain number of errors. The level at which he/she exceeds the prescribed number of errors is the one recorded on the Limited English Proficient Program Articulation Card.

All the prospective focal students were placed at the first level, or Level A, on the IDEA test. Some typical questions for Level 1, from Form A of the test, are as follows:

> Please touch your ear with your hand.
> Name three things that you see in this classroom.
> What is this? (a square)
> And this? (a triangle)

Students have to score 10 or more correct answers to move on to Level B.

The researchers did not obtain sample reading and writing tests. In spite of the label of "none" for reading and writing for the focal students, it seemed clear, from their school work within a short time of arrival in the U.S., and from their conversations with the researchers, that all of them actually had had some instruction in English reading and writing. In other words, among the Mandarin-speakers, it proved to be practically impossible to find students with "zero English." (Why they tested as "none" for reading and writing was not clear; maybe they were nervous and performed poorly on the test, or maybe the test failed to elicit what they did know.) So the researchers had to settle for the closest approximations.

Furthermore, the original research design had to be modified for the Chinese speakers because all the prospective focal students had previous schooling and literacy experiences in the native language. The original research design called for two students with previous schooling and literacy experiences in their first language, two students with no or minimal schooling and literacy experience in their first language. However, given the actual demographic patterns of post-1965 Chinese immigration and the socioeconomic characteristics of the area served by Cooperville Junior High, it was impossible to find anyone representing the latter group. Even finding someone like Martin Zhang, who was from a working-class background, was hard enough; the other prospective subjects were all from middle-class professional families. This contrasts with the data for the Spanish-speaking students, for whom it was easier to find both students with hardly any English exposure and students with limited schooling and literacy in Spanish prior to immigration.

PROBLEMS WITH ACCESS

Parents' Attitudes

Another contrast with the Spanish-speakers' data in the parents' attitude toward the research project, which affected access to the students. When the parents of the

prospective Chinese-speaking focal students were initially approached through a letter explaining the purpose of the study and requesting consent for the child to be observed and interviewed, one parent appended a written comment stating that the study must not impede the child's academic progress. Another parent who consented was upset when Mr. Hinton gave her child time off from a minor test in order to take part in an interview, so future interviews had to be conducted hastily during lunch hour or after school. Even after having given permission, a parent could reconsider. For example, during the second year, Audrey So's father gave her permission to decide whether to continue taking part in the study. This severely upset the power relationship between her and Zou, who was now clearly perceived as powerless and as a supplicant for a favor. When the family of Matt Chang moved to a nearby town and took him to another junior high, Zou asked to visit him at his new home to finish the last Language Assessment. His father was extremely reluctant and consented only after Zou convinced him that it would not take too much time and that the data were badly needed to complete the study.

This kind of parental attitude was somewhat surprising to Wong, since she thought that the traditional Chinese esteem for teachers, especially university professors, might give her an advantage in gaining access to the students, or that a consideration of the project's potential benefit to Chinese immigrant students might soften the parents. As it turned out, these factors carried little weight with some of the parents, who expressed a great deal of anxiety about the children's progress through the ESL class, focusing strictly on the children's performance in a predetermined program, apparently with little curiosity about the process undergone by their children or their general welfare in the school. They also seemed to be confident enough in their ability to handle their children's education and negotiate the school system not to desire any possible intermediary in the person of the investigator. In contrast, the Spanish-speaking parents appeared more deferential to the investigator as someone who could explain the school system to them and help their children. They expressed little suspicion that participation in the study might be detrimental to their children's academic performance.

Teachers' Attitudes

In addition to misgivings expressed by the parents, the ESL teachers' distrust was a problem for the researchers from the start, leading to limitations in the amount and type of data gathered. Even though Wong tried to make it as clear as possible that the study was not an evaluation or a critique of the instruction, some suspicion lingered throughout the study. It was perhaps natural for the ESL teachers to be wary of outside observers; in a period of economic recession, rapid demographic changes impacting the schools, and anti-immigrant sentiments, ESL teachers probably feel they are over-scrutinized by the public already. They are charged with "processing" a large number of NEP and LEP students from diverse language backgrounds quickly and efficiently into the "mainstream," often with minimal resources, so problems are not difficult to find. While resistance to researchers coming into the school is widespread, avoidable only if the teacher is also the researcher (an increasingly accepted approach), in this case the difficulty may have been exacerbated because the ethnographic method described to the ESL teachers sounded so open-ended as to

hint at a hidden agenda. Moreover, since both Wong and Zou were inexperienced in ethnographic research; they may have raised the teachers' distrust by inadvertently behaving in insensitive ways. Professor Valdés also experienced some distrust from the ESL teachers when she studied the Spanish-speaking students, but was more successful in overcoming the obstacle.

Wong and Zou detected a defensive attitude in two of the ESL teachers. For example, in the first meeting between Wong, Mr. Akers, and the three ESL teachers, Mrs. Garcia asked Wong about her background in ESL, as if to check her credentials for undertaking such a study. When Wong told of her M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language as well as her years of experience teaching writing to immigrant students at the college level, Mrs. Garcia appeared satisfied. However, when Zou, who had no such credentials, took over and observed Mrs. Garcia's class during the second year of the study, he experienced great difficulties after an initially obliging response toward him as "Professor Wong's assistant." Mrs. Garcia showed hostility toward his presence quite openly and frequently. One time, when Zou happened upon her non-ESL class by mistake (after the ESL classes had been canceled during the beginning-of-the-semester shuffle), she almost threw him out of the room. Later that day she admitted Zou to her classroom reluctantly but then did no teaching, asking students to draw circles and decorate them to make clocks, in the meantime keeping an eye on him and coming by to glance at his notes. Zou thus felt forced to take notes in Chinese, which may have increased her suspicions. On another day, Zou was admitted into Mrs. Garcia's classroom but was immediately told that the students would go to work on the computers in the library and then return to take a test. While this schedule could be coincidence, it exemplified the "hit or miss" way in which Zou could gain access to the students and to Mrs. Garcia's writing instruction.

To avoid Mrs. Garcia's wrath, Zou had to assure her that he would not be present in her class more than once a week; naturally he felt constrained in asking questions about her class. Mrs. Garcia's distrust also affected the focal students' cooperation, as she made it clear that Zou's presence was only grudgingly tolerated. While Mrs. Garcia did relent somewhat toward the latter part of the second year, one incident showed that she still felt scrutinized for her effectiveness as a teacher. Once, after Zou saw what Mrs. Garcia considered a poor sample of writing by John Sun, she gave Zou a longer, revised and more finished-looking essay by John Sun, as if to correct any misimpression Zou might have of the effectiveness of her teaching. Zou's difficult situation was exacerbated by the fact that Mrs. Garcia and Mrs. Fielding, the other second-year ESL teacher, apparently had a strained relationship, for some reason that he couldn't fathom. By having to alternate between their classrooms in order to cover all the focal students, Zou might have aroused suspicions about being compared.

If Mrs. Garcia guarded against having her teaching evaluated, Mr. Hinton was apparently eager to have his teaching evaluated and commended. Neither completely accepted the clarification that the researchers' attention was on the focal students' writing development. Compared to Mrs. Garcia, Mr. Hinton had an "open-door" policy that made it easy for Wong and Zou to come and go as needed, to mingle with the students, and to obtain information from him and his aides. He

encouraged them to serve as "aides" in the classroom. Mr. Hinton appeared to like having someone from UC Berkeley observe his class; Wong's familiarity with the terms and concepts of TESL also seemed to win his favor. Nevertheless, this created another kind of problem: Mr. Hinton repeatedly turned to Wong, as a fellow ESL professional with more signs of institutional validation, to endorse his teaching philosophy and methods and his generalizations about the students. It became very awkward for Wong to have to dodge his questions, as to whether he was applying Krashen's theories correctly in his teaching, or whether she agreed that Spanish-speaking students did poorly because their families didn't value education. It was a relief for her when Zou took over.

Nevertheless, even with Zou, who does not have TESL credentials, Mr. Hinton persisted in thinking of the project as evaluative and was extremely obliging toward him. Once he interrupted the class to set up an appointment with Zou to address some of his questions, which put him in an awkward spot. Furthermore, Mr. Hinton exerted pressure on Zou not to follow Audrey So and Martin Zhang too closely into other classes; he expressed the apprehension that their low performance might mislead Zou, blinding him to the progress made by the entire ESL group. Mr. Hinton insisted that he (Mr. Hinton) would talk to the principal first about such visits, even though Mr. Akers had already approved of this "shadowing" when he approved of the project. In other words, Mr. Hinton would like to be the "broker" controlling Zou's access to the other settings where the focal students might be observed. Zou did make an effort to observe a math class. However, Mr. Hinton's pressure, the desire not to alienate him and miss out on the most important (ESL-related) data, and the time shortage problem due to the distance of the school site, combined to make Zou give up on following the focal students to their non-language classes. In any case, during the first year, the students' English skills were too inadequate for them to take regular Science, so Math was the only content-subject class he could observe.

The second-year situation was a little different. As explained below in the "ESL Program" section, after the first year, the focal students were directed into different ESL classes, creating a logistical nightmare for Zou just to observe them all in ESL class settings. Zou did, however, make an effort to observe a few Science classes. (Some of the focal students were by now judged ready to take Science.) He introduced himself to the science teachers by talking to them directly and explaining the research project briefly to them, again emphasizing that the focus was on the students and not the teaching.

Of the three ESL teachers involved, Mrs. Fielding seemed the most "laid back." She was the only one who asked Zou to talk to her class for about ten minutes about what he was doing, thus dispelling some of the students' speculations about his presence. She, too, made it clear to Zou that his role would be strictly that of an observer: no participation as an "aide" as in Mr. Hinton's class was allowed. Nevertheless, Mrs. Fielding was very helpful with data collection; she told Audrey So to turn over her homework and journal entries to the project. Audrey did comply, after some whispered grumbling and "forgetting" the folder several times. Because of Mrs. Fielding's more cooperative attitude, the researchers obtained at least one extensive set of writing samples for the second year.

Students' Attitudes

Both the parents' reluctance and the teachers' misgivings would reduce access to the focal students, who were old enough to figure out that the researchers were asking them a favor. Moreover, regardless of attitude, it was at times impossible to avoid appearing to single out the focal students, adding to their defiance. Even when a teacher was being helpful to Zou, they would sometimes ask a focal student to work with him in front of classmates, adding to the focal student's embarrassment. When focal students were interviewed, it was impossible to avoid attract curious glances even if the researcher tried to go to a quiet area like the library or a remote corner of the school grounds during lunch hour. Sometimes, fellow LEP students teased the focal students when they were seen working with the researcher. Given the general sensitivity of the Chinese immigrant students and their parents toward ESL, which they regarded as a stigma and an obstacle to academic achievement, any additional attention drawing to their "difference" was certainly much resented. Related to sensitivity about being in ESL was suspiciousness about asked to produce writing samples in Chinese. Audrey So, for example, felt somewhat insulted when Zou asked her to write something in Chinese: she took offense at the perceived suggestion that her English was not good enough.

A difficulty perhaps peculiar to this study—certainly one unanticipated by the researchers—was related to the age of the focal students. The two years of the study coincided with a period of rapid physical and psychological changes in the subjects' adolescence. Much of the moodiness Zou increasingly encountered during the second year could be attributed to this, exacerbated by the stresses of immigration and relocation. For example, John Sun, one of the focal students, tall for his age to begin with, grew so much that he approached Zou's height; concomitantly, he became openly rebellious toward both him and the ESL teacher, and refused to participate in the study until patiently coaxed. Even the only girl in the study, Audrey So, who was sweet and cooperative at the beginning, became more and more reluctant and even hostile during the second year. At one point she acted (in Zou's words) "hysterical" when asked to participate, practically screaming in his face as her fellow students taunted her. Another time, when reminded by her teacher Mrs. Fielding to bring her writing folder to give to Zou, she withdrew and muttered under her breath, though yielding eventually. Conceivably, with focal students at a younger age, a request by an "authority figure" might have met with readier compliance; at an older age, a focal student might act more maturely in honoring his/her commitment to take part in the study.

DATA COLLECTION

The study was based on school-site visits to the focal students' ESL classes (and some Science and Math classes) over a two-year period, during which their writing activities and the writing instruction they received were examined in the larger context of their school experience; and writing samples were collected both in formal language assessments and, for one of the students, as a portfolio given to the researchers at the teacher's request. Whenever possible, interviews with relevant

school personnel were conducted, and efforts were made to socialize with teachers and aides in informal settings like the teachers' room and the cafeteria. Details of the design can be found in the project proposal.

It was decided early on to tape-record and transcribe only the language assessments and to rely on written field notes for collecting the other data. This decision was based partly on the access problems described above, as a means to avoid further straining relationships with both the teachers and the focal students and risking an abortion of the project. Also, "open" tape-recording of classrooms usually generated too much incomprehensible noise to yield focused data.

As Zou wrote up field notes immediately after school site visits and gave them to Wong, Wong read them and made suggestions on what aspects to focus on in upcoming observations. As noted in the "Problems with Access" section, the efforts to obtain specific types of information were successful only part of the time. However, within these constraints, the researchers made their best effort to obtain as complete as possible an ethnographic picture of the focal students' English-learning environment, especially as it concerned writing.

A total of 31 visits were made over the two school years, each visit lasting at least five hours, yielding an estimated total of 155 hours of observations. When one of the focal students, Matt Chang, moved to another school toward the end of the second year of the study, Zou visited him at home to administer the last Language Assessment.

PROFILES OF THE RESEARCHERS

Sau-ling C. Wong

Wong was born in Hong Kong in 1948 and came to the U.S. at age 20 to attend college and graduate school and then settled in the San Francisco Bay Area. She holds a Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Stanford University (1978) and an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language from San Francisco State University (1980). During the mid-1970s, she worked in a bilingual (Chinese-English) materials development center in the East Bay. She taught ESL (all subjects) in a English language institute affiliated with San Jose State University before taking a position at UC Berkeley in 1981, to teach and coordinate reading and composition courses serving Asian-ancestry students (many of whom were immigrants); as well as to teach courses on Asian American language issues, Chinese immigrant literature, and Asian American literature.

Wong has worked extensively with Chinese-speaking immigrant students at the college level. She has been active on various committees at the department, campus, and UC-systemwide levels dealing with the ESL program, remedial and preparatory education (including remedial writing), the Subject A examination, the reading and composition requirement for the undergraduate degree, and foreign Teaching Assistant training. However, prior to this study, she had not worked with Chinese immigrant students at the junior high level.

Wong is co-editor, with Sandra Lee McKay, of *Language Diversity: Problem or Resource? A Social and Educational Perspective on Language Minorities in the United States* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, 1988), in

which she authored a chapter on the language situation of Chinese Americans and a chapter on the educational rights of language minorities. She has published a number of articles on the language-learning situation and needs of Asian immigrant and refugee students; on the social context of language teaching; research on Chinese learners of English; and error analysis; in journals such as the *NABE Journal* and *Modern Language Journal*. At conferences such as TESOL, CATESOL, and NAAPAE (National Association for Asian Pacific American Education), as well as at various invitational conferences and workshops on cultural/linguistic diversity and immigrant students in California, she has presented papers on the above topics; on the English-Only Movement; on the teaching of writing to Asian American and Chinese students; and on grammar-teaching techniques.

Wong is a native Cantonese speaker who is biliterate in Chinese and English. She can speak Mandarin reasonably well in everyday conversational situations.

John Zou

Wong's research assistant John Zou (to be referred to as Zou in the study to avoid confusion with one of the focal students by the name of John Sun) was born in 1966 in the People's Republic of China. He is multi-dialectal in Chinese. With his mother being from Shanghai and his father from another province, Zou speaks two different dialects from near the Shanghai area with two of his grandparents; Shanghainese with other people in Shanghai; and Mandarin, the Chinese lingua franca, at home with his parents as well as in school and for public interactions. Thus he possesses native proficiency in both Mandarin and Shanghainese.

In 1984-5, Zou was in England as an exchange student to study at the School of English, University of Leeds. In 1986, he graduated from Fudan University in Shanghai with a degree in English, and taught English there until 1989. That year he came to the U.S. to attend graduate school in Intercultural Communication at the University of Maryland in Baltimore. He took classes in sociolinguistics and cultural anthropology, and had written papers on topics such as Labov's method in testing the language ability of inner city ghetto children; history-writing in Andean mountain and Central African rural communities; and the influence of the Voice of America in China during the Tiananmen demonstrations in 1989. In 1991, Zou obtained his M.A. from the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Maryland, then came to UC Berkeley as a graduate student in the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature.

THE PROGRAM FOR NEP AND LEP STUDENTS

The Newcomer Center

At the beginning of the study, the Cooperville Unified School District served 550 ESL students representing 25 different languages. There were four Newcomer Centers, described as "school within a school" in the school district literature, serving almost 600 lst- through 8th grade students. Cooperville Junior High houses one of them, serving 7th and 8th grade students identified as non- or limited English-speaking from throughout the Cooperville School District. At the time the study began, there were about 125 ESL students, of whom some 14 withdrew at

various points. While the ESL student population fluctuated throughout the study, the following figures were close approximations: 36 Mandarin speakers; 8 Cantonese speakers; 9 Spanish speakers; the rest a mixture of language groups, including Vietnamese, Japanese, Russian, Romanian, and so on. Three teachers—Mr. Hinton, Mrs. Fielding, and Mrs. Garcia—are responsible for them. Each teacher was assigned his/her own classroom. By the middle of the second year of this study, the Cooperville School District had decided to move the newcomer program to another junior high, Hill School, starting Fall 1993. All three of the ESL teachers were to move as well, together with the aides.

Mr. Akers, who had been the principal of Cooperville Junior High for a year, told me that the ESL program used to be housed in a portable building/trailer in a corner of the school grounds but is now integrated physically into the center of the campus. This apparently had a salutary effect both on the ESL program's perceived status, the ESL teachers' morale, and the students' sense of belonging. By Mr. Akers's description, the ESL program used to be more "bookish" but has become more "physical," involving more activities.

The school day began at 8:00 a.m. and ended at 2:40 p.m. The regular schedule consisted of seven 45-minute periods, two announcement periods, a 20-minute brunch, and a 44-minute lunch. Students have no free periods. Teachers had the 2nd period as a free period for preparations.

Program Design and Student Placement

While "ESL" was the term used informally by the school personnel to refer to the entire program for NEP and LEP students, officially speaking only the lowest-proficiency class taught by Mr. Hinton was considered ESL, and its official title was "ELD" or "English Language Development." The next level, usually correlated with the second year of junior high, was called "Sheltered Core" (integrating English and History) taught by Mrs. Fielding and Mrs. Garcia. From Sheltered Core, advanced ESL students could move to Regular Core. For the sake of convenience, in this study Sheltered Core is sometimes referred to as 8th-grade ESL, and the Sheltered Core teachers as ESL teachers. This practice not only correlated with the school personnel's informal usage, but with the parents' perceptions. As long as a student was not yet in Regular Core, the parent tended to consider him/her in ESL, no matter what the official nomenclature of the program was. However, as it turned out, there did seem to be a difference in conceptualization between ELD and Sheltered Core, especially as it related to writing instruction. Details will be discussed later in this report.

Mr. Hinton was the sole "gatekeeper" charged with advancing a student from ELD to either one of the Sheltered Core classes. Mrs. Fielding's Sheltered Core was less advanced; to move from it into Mrs. Garcia's, a student had score at least a 3 in writing on a holistic 5-level rubric. (This rubric was not based on a state or national standardized test; it was later changed to the CLAS six-level rubric). He/she also needed to score an F (highest) on the IDEA test.

In order to exit Sheltered Core into Regular Core—in school district bureaucratic parlance, to be "reclassified"—a student not only had to pass the IDEA, but also the CTBS (California Test of Basic Skills) essay-writing test (scored holistically) and

reading test, scoring at the 36th percentile or higher. In practice, it was possible to informally advance a student based on the Sheltered Core teacher's assessment, but he/she would still have to be officially reclassified later. The CTBS was given once or twice a year; at Mr. Hinton's level, a student could take it up to three times. The CTBS was changed to the ICBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) in 1993.

In March 1993, Zou was visiting the school when the CTBS was given. He was told that 8th grade LEP students who had been in the U.S. for over 30 months (i.e., since they were 6th-graders) took it with native speakers, while the rest of the LEP students took the test for 4th-graders. It turned out that only two students in Mrs. Garcia's class fell into the first category, which suggested that most LEP students moved out of the ESL program within 2 to 2-1/2 years. The two low-proficiency students were a Japanese girl and a Vietnamese boy; we had no data on them and it was not clear why they lagged behind the others in English acquisition.

If a student was not ready for exit from ESL within two years, he/she would be placed in an ELD program in any one of the five high schools in the district that he/she would be attending, depending on address.

Mr. Hinton taught the lowest-proficiency ELD class and was full-time ESL, whereas Mrs. Garcia taught regular English as well and Mrs. Fielding also had other responsibilities. One group met with Mr. Hinton him in the morning in Core, from 9:39 to 11:31 a.m. (3rd and 4th periods). Another group had Core in the afternoon from 1:04 to 2:40 p.m. (6th and 7th periods). ESL Lab was first period (8:00-8:45 a.m.) and 5th period (11:35-12:20 p.m.). The distinction between ESL Core and ESL Lab for Mr. Hinton was that information-oriented instruction was done in the former, and drills were the focus of the latter (though plenty enough drills were done in ESL Core as well, judging from the classroom observations). A few students with weak ESL skills attended both morning and afternoon sessions.

Mr. Hinton's class size fluctuated throughout the year: a problem shared by all ESL programs dealing with newcomer students, whose families' immigration schedule depends on many factors and often does not take the school year into account. While newcomers also entered in the middle of the semester in Mrs. Fielding's and Mrs. Garcia's classes, it was at Mr. Hinton's level that the fluctuations were the most noticeable and required the most flexibility. For example, after the 1991 Christmas break, five more new students enrolled in Mr. Hinton's class. As a result, the aide Sandra Baxter had to pay a more substantial role, almost running a "class within a class" at the back of the room. This cut down on the time that she had available to circulate the "regular" students, and Mr. Hinton ended up doing a fair amount of individual tutoring of them. The new arrangement changed the power balance in the classroom, causing Mr. Hinton to be treat Sandra Baxter with more courtesy. In mid-March, 1992, Zou found on his visit that 15 new students had enrolled in Mr. Hinton's afternoon ESL Core within the previous two weeks, requiring Sandra Baxter to virtually take over half of the class.

The problem with fluctuating class size at the entry level reached crisis point at the beginning of the Fall semester during the second year of the study. A large number of new NEP and LEP students entered. Mr. Hinton's afternoon class almost doubled in size and became packed. Again, the aide had to take up more responsibilities, and the overworked, beleaguered teacher became explosive. Once,

he ended up abandoning his "open door policy" and locked his door with an eye-catching "Do Not Disturb" sign posted on it.

The Cooperville Unified School District expected NEP and LEP students to reach Level D of the IDEA test after one semester of ESL. Mr. Hinton felt under pressure to move his students through. But according to aide Sandra Baxter (who told this to Zou with some relish), he was behind normative time. At the end of February 1992 (in the middle of the second semester of the study), after the IDEA test was administered, Zou saw him sign off only one student, a Russian immigrant, to go to regular Core. (Mr. Hinton did not directly disclose any information to Zou on what was expected of him.) Because the letters on IDEA represent the reverse of regular letter-grading, where A is the highest, Baxter joked that the students were getting conceited from all their A's and B's. In fact, the average score was C.

Mr. Hinton was the sole "gatekeeper" passing students on to Mrs. Fielding's and Mrs. Garcia's Sheltered Core classes. When Zou made an appointment to ask Mr. Hinton to ask him about the IDEA test, instead of explaining it, Mr. Hinton seemed eager to use this time to erase any negative impression Zou might have about his students' progress. He ended up administering the IDEA test to John Sun again. Partly because of lack of time (John Sun was expecting his mother to pick him up), maybe partly from a desire to have something to show to Mrs. Sun, Mr. Hinton repeated questions, suggested answers, and sometimes ignored mistakes, eventually obtaining a score of D for John Sun, which was the "normative" grade expected by the school district but higher than the class average.

The focal students' IDEA score in May 1992 were: Martin Zhang: B (the lowest); Matt Chang: C; Audrey So: C; John Sun: D (the highest). Upon returning to Mr. Hinton's classroom at the beginning of the fall semester, 1992 (3rd semester of the study), Zou wrote in his field notes: "All the old students, including the 'ne'er-do-well' Mexican kids and the latecomers, have entered the higher classes under Mrs. Garcia and Mrs. Fielding. The group that used to be tutored by Sandra Baxter [i.e., those who came in the middle of the first year and had to be taught in a 'class within a class'] has disappeared as if by a miracle. . . . This looks particularly dubious if one remembers how poorly those students performed near the end of the last school year." Martin Zhang did not report to school at the beginning of the second project year and was thus dropped from the project. In accordance with the normal practice in small-scale longitudinal studies, he was not replaced.

With a rather loose "gatekeeping" system, premature exit from the beginners' class could be a problem. At the beginning of the second year, several of the students promoted to 8th grade Sheltered Core had to be "kicked back" into his class, much to their humiliation and Mr. Hinton's chagrin and stress.

Mrs. Fielding used to be in charge of the ESL Lab for Mrs. Garcia's Core ESL, but as explained below, she now took over about half of the 8th graders in Core when Mrs. Garcia's class got too large. Mrs. Garcia, as mentioned above, taught some ESL classes and some regular English classes. Since the better-performing students could be advanced to Mrs. Garcia's class, at the 8th grade level, students did not necessarily stay with a single ESL teacher. A further distinction between the two classes of Sheltered Core was that Mrs. Fielding's involved three periods, Mrs. Garcia's, only two. Of the focal students remaining after the first school year, Audrey So started

with Mrs. Fielding and stayed with her throughout 8th grade. Matt Chang started with one period each with Mrs. Fielding and Mrs. Garcia, but by November had moved on completely to the latter. John Sun placed directly into Mrs. Garcia's Sheltered Core.

While reclassification was determined by standardized testing, the 8th grade Sheltered Core teachers had some "gatekeeping" power with regard to other subjects. For example, within three weeks of the new school year, Mrs. Fielding said to Zou that Audrey So was doing well enough in English to have one period of regular Science, so she would have only two periods of ESL, even though this came as something of a surprise to Zou, who did not see Audrey's performance as particularly impressive.

Over the second year, Mrs. Garcia's class size decreased from about 30 at the beginning to 12, as some students gradually moved on to Regular Core.

Math and Science

Officially the Math and Science classes were regular, not Sheltered. However, according to the school district, the Math and Science teachers knew which students were LEP and would take this into account when judging their work. Thus even for the newcomers, if they were judged ready to handle the content, they could take Math or Science. Perhaps because math symbols are universal and the level of math education in the U.S. was lower than that in many foreign countries, some ESL students went out to regular Math almost immediately upon arrival in Cooperville Junior High. (However, the principal, Mr. Vince Akers, told me that some Asian students now come in with weak math skills and no longer fit the stereotype of the whiz kid in math.) There were four levels of math: Low, Medium, High, and Pre-algebra, this last being a preparation for high school math. LEP students who had trouble with Math and Science could get tutoring in a Noon Science Lab, or else get extra help from an aide in the ELD class speaking their native language, if one was available. In other words, native-language aides were not attached to the Math and Science classes, but were available for help in those areas.

While officially it was "the luck of the draw" whether a LEP student would end up in morning or afternoon Math or Science, in practice the morning class was perceived as the "better" class. Certainly from the teacher's point of view, a morning class got more attention from the students, and the teacher in turn probably taught with greater energy. The same seemed to be true of other classes.

Although both Math and Science were "regular," Zou found a difference in the way LEP students were treated in them, based both on his observations and the focal students' accounts. In Math, LEP students were treated more or less the same as the "regular kids" and called upon just as often to answer questions, and their LEP status didn't seem to affect grading. In contrast, Science involved more language use. The explanation of concepts and vocabulary required more English; sometimes several answers to the same question were possible and needed to be discussed. Also, lab experiments were done in group and were conversation-inducing. As difficulties arose, Zou saw some of the LEP students take the easy way out by copying answers from classmates. Sometimes this happened between groups.

One of the science teachers interviewed by Zou, Mr. Carlotta (who had John Sun in his class) was not happy with this arrangement of placing LEP students into regular Science. He commented that the school put them in the regular Science class to learn English. At first Zou thought it was a compliment to the students—that their knowledge of science in the native country was so good that all they needed was to learn the English for the subject. However, this was not what he meant at all. He meant that the LEP students were not doing well, not understanding what was happening in class. (John Sun happened to be one of the better ones.) However, Mr. Carlotta said that he always adjusted the LEP students' Science grades so that their language problem did not show up on the grade report.

Electives

In addition to Core, Math and Science, each student could take two electives, such as PE, music (instrumental), choir, sewing, wood shop or metal shop, and art. Sometimes placement into electives depended partly on English proficiency (for example, for safety reasons, woodshop is usually recommended for more advanced ESL students who can understand the instructions), but otherwise electives were integrated, non-sheltered classes and not restricted. A first-year ESL student's schedule might include: ESL Core and Lab for a total of four periods; Math for one period; Art for one period; and PE for one period.

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN THE CHINESE IMMIGRANT STUDENT COMMUNITY

Diversity of Background

The focal students were part of the community of 30-odd Chinese immigrant students from various backgrounds at Cooperville Junior High. The group was made up of native speakers of Cantonese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, and other dialects from Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland, and Taiwan; some students from Vietnamese might be ethnic Chinese and spoke Chinese as well. Some students were multi-dialectal (see section on "Focal Student Selection" above), and some picked up smatterings of other dialects from interacting with friends. There was usually at least one "Chinese table" in the "quad" during lunch. Details of native language use will be provided in the sections on the classrooms later in this report.

Chinese Dialect Use

A couple of general observations can be added here. Common dialect background was an important basis for social bonding, whereas dialect differences—often encoding regional, subcultural, political, and socioeconomic differences within the immigrant community—could either be a source of distance or a source of bonding to create a sense of a greater common Chinese identity. For example, the Cantonese speakers tended to sit together while the students from Taiwan formed another clique, or the Mandarin speakers might make funny remarks in Mandarin at the teacher's expense when they were caught in a tricky situation risking disciplinary action. Taiwanese profanities (John Sun's favorite being the equivalent of "F--- your mother") were used for ritual insults among the boys. On the other hand, students

from different dialect backgrounds often compared notes on Chinese usage and taught each other phrases from their own dialects, resorting to writing (the writing system is shared) if speech proved inadequate. For example, once Wong observed the Taiwanese students teaching *hao bang!*, a colloquial Mandarin expression comparable to "Cool!" or "Great!", to mainlander Martin Zhang, who practiced it laughingly.

The multi-dialectal students who could perform code-switching had a means of establishing precise social distance at their disposal. For example, John Sun was just friends with Matt Chang at first but during the second year, when his buddy of comparable physical stature Dan moved on to Regular Core, he was forced to interact more with Matt. Though both of them were Taiwanese, John would speak Mandarin, the "public language" or the "language of power" to Matt most of the time, reserving Taiwanese, the "language of solidarity," for occasional teasing, in order to convey the message that Matt was not to be as close to him as his former buddies.

Negotiations of Identity

Thus the single English term *Chinese* turned out to hold multiple meanings and involve complex negotiations of identity among the Chinese immigrant students at Cooperville. For example, a girl from the mainland once told researcher Wong in Mandarin, "I am authentic Chinese [*zhengzong zhongguoren*], he's from Taiwan" (pointing to another student); she might be referring to the regional marginality of the island of Taiwan or the officially recognized status of the mainland regime. When the focal students were asked their nationality during the three Language Assessments, the focal students gave a range of answers (to the extent the question was understood). John Sun consistently said "Taiwan," Martin Zhang consistently said "China." But Audrey So changed from "Chinese," "Sichuan" (actually referring to the province of origin of her family) and "Taiwanese," the last answer perhaps influenced by her strong Taiwanese peer group. Matt Chang moved from "the Republic of China" (Taiwan's official self-designation), to no answer, to "Taiwanese," again maybe reflecting increasing adoption of a Taiwanese identity after coming to the U.S.

Chinese Literacy in Action

As for the role of Chinese literacy in the Cooperville Chinese immigrant community, all of the students appeared literate; the use of bilingual English-Chinese dictionaries was widespread. The sharing of the writing system facilitated interactions between dialect groups. The time-honored classroom practice of passing notes behind the teacher's back was done in Chinese by some of the students. The circulation of Chinese-language comic books was another instance of literacy at work. Sometimes comics-reading took place right in the classroom, when the teacher was occupied with other matters. The Taiwanese boys shared comics of a rather racy nature, showing scantily-clad women and violent actions; Martin Zhang, the sole mainland student, was apparently excluded from the circuit. The Taiwanese girls read comics of a tamer kind. Of course, the use of language was minimal in

these comics, and the variety used was probably nonstandard, but it did represent a means to maintain Chinese use in an English-speaking setting.

Judging from their descriptions of after-school and weekend activities, none of the focal students attended Chinese-language school. In the Silicon Valley area, Chinese languages school typically consists of weekend classes, often combined with other cultural activities for both the children and the parents, taking place in school buildings or community centers and taught by parent-volunteer or semi-professional staff. Since the influx of post-1965 middle-class immigrants, Chinese school has experienced a kind of revival; in the context of the economic ascendancy of Asia, bilingualism is increasingly seen as a source of cultural pride and an employment asset. The status of Chinese in the U.S. was further elevated when the Educational Testing Service decided to accept Chinese as a foreign language for college admission and scheduled the first SAT Chinese test for Spring 1994. However, recent immigrant parents may decide not to send their children to Chinese school for fear of retarding their development in English. That seemed to be the case with the focal students.

When asked over a period of two years about the situations in which they heard and used English, none of the focal students described any substantial expansion of their English language environment beyond the school, stores, theaters, and restaurants.

PROFILES OF THE FOCAL STUDENTS

Matt Chang

Matt Chang was born in Taiwan and completed his primary education as well as a year in junior high before coming to the U.S. at age 12. Prior to that, he attended "night school" to learn English. (English was not taught in elementary school in Taiwan). He joined Mr. Hinton's class in mid-October, over a month later than the other focal students.

Matt was from a well-to-do family. Her parents used to work in banks in Taiwan. At the beginning of the study, his father was working in Bangkok; after nearly a year he was transferred to the U.S. In the U.S. Matt's mother became a home-maker, and later became an aide in Cooperville Junior High. Matt had an older brother. The family was Taiwanese and were native Taiwanese speakers, but they were fully functional in Mandarin.

Strictly speaking, Matt's family was not "immigrant" but came here for job-related reasons on some kind of temporary status. However, many "temporary" Chinese entrants from backgrounds similar to the Changs' do end up staying permanently, using a variety of means to circumvent the visa problem (middle-class families often hire legal help). It was not clear whether the Changs would end up staying.

Short and dark-complexioned, Matt was a shy youngster who had trouble asking questions or approaching the teachers and aides. When approached in an amiable manner, he could be quite articulate. Zou felt that he was psychologically and verbally less mature than Martin Zhang or John Sun. Maybe being a younger sibling

had something to do with it; so did being from a strict family which expected a lot of him academically.

Matt was active in sports. When asked what he liked about American school, he said lack of physical punishment: students didn't get a beating if they didn't perform well in school. He felt, like Martin Zhang, that math was easy, and that there were a lot of things to play with. When asked his priorities in school, he said "play basketball, study English."

Matt seemed someone well trained to go through a demanding educational system. Matt had good study habits. He had better concentration than the other focal students; more than once, Zou marveled at his ability to continue working on his assignment while engaging in three-way teasing and bantering with his friends. He was also the most diligent in consulting the dictionary; at least during the second year, he used an English-English dictionary consistently, and when he could not figure out a definition in English he would ask Mrs. Garcia.

Matt was attentive and obedient in class. He worked hard and generally didn't show much transgressive or rebellious behavior. Compared to Martin Zhang, he was more docile and had few individualistic opinions to air. Of the focal students, Matt was the one who did what he was asked, gave to-the-point answers, and was ready to follow instructions. Once, when he met Zou outside of the class setting, in the cafeteria, he showed deference to Zou's status and age by shyly declining to go first, in a very "traditional Chinese" way.

However, Matt Chang was not without his "edge." When Zou asked for a lunch-hour appointment with him for his first language assessment, Matt made an impatient and rather rude remark in Chinese, *zhen fan!*, or "What a nuisance." This was his way of expressing displeasure when Zou's request carried the authority of the ESL teacher's approval and thus could not be refused.

Almost a year after arrival, when asked about his current language use, Matt Chang said that he used Mandarin and Taiwanese with his Chinese friends and English with his American friends, but admitted that he had few of the latter. Though he could almost understand everything in English by then, his spoken English was quite heavily accented, and remained so at the end of two years at Cooperville. He hung around with mostly Chinese friends, confessing that he had few English-speaking friends and remarking that PE was the only class where English didn't matter. He was confident in Math generally, but admitted that he was beginning to have trouble with math problems that involved the English language. Still, he was able to get help from the teacher and do well. At home, he watched mostly English-language TV programs after finishing homework, switching to the Chinese channel only for new. In any case, he was not allowed to watch much TV.

Starting lower than Audrey So and John Sun, Matt Chang ended up being perceived as the one making the most progress. (Analysis of his Language Assessments would show that Matt was not as advanced in English as he seemed.) In May 1992, Audrey So expressed her admiration for Matt's achievements in a conversation with Zou, showing that his progress in ESL class was quite well-known among his peers. Also, when he later moved to another school in a nearby town and gave the impression that he was attending regular English (when in fact he was still in the ELD program there), his peers, aides and teachers believed him.

In profiling Matt Chang, it is necessary to say something about his mother, who was extremely aggressive with regard to his son's education. (To what extent this pushiness accounted for Matt's progress in English was impossible to ascertain, but it almost certainly had an effect.) According to Matt, Mrs. Chang, a woman in her late 30s or early 40s, had a degree in English from Taiwan. She understood English conversation reasonably well but spoke it poorly. Within the first few weeks of Matt's arrival, Mrs. Chang, using her limited English, was already putting a lot of pressure on the teacher, complaining about the slow improvement in English made by her son. Once, within earshot of the other teachers, she offered to pay Mr. Hinton extra to become Matt's private tutor after school, which was quite out of line by American standards. (It was not clear to Zou whether Mr. Hinton took the offer.)

In mid-November (i.e., after Matt had been in the U.S. a month), when Mrs. Chang was again complaining about her son's poor progress to Sandra Baxter and Zou, the latter tried to point out that a recent immigrant student might be homesick and that unreasonable pressure might backfire. However, Mrs. Chang replied that Matt would have no one but himself to blame for his problems, for he was the one who wanted to come to the U.S. in the first place. This last remark was rather surprising; it's doubtful whether adults would decide on a major uprooting simply because a child wanted to go to another country. It's possible that pointing out Matt's complicity was Mrs. Chang's way of "guilt-tripping," of putting additional pressure on her son.

Starting Fall 1992, she became an aide in Mr. Hinton's class, striking up a friendship with Sandra Baxter, with whom she spoke Taiwanese together. Baxter told Zou that originally Mrs. Chang tried to become an aide in Mrs. Garcia's class so as to be close to his son, but Mrs. Garcia, not wanting another adult in her class, flatly rejected her. Partly to kill time and partly to keep an eye on Matt in school, Mrs. Chang became an aide in Mr. Hinton's class. She was rather disdainful of Mr. Hinton, calling him *laotouzi*, "the old man" and complaining about his short temper. She was also dissatisfied with Mr. Hinton's teaching, not for its being too repetitive but for *not requiring enough memorization*. She said that his students couldn't even spell properly after taking English for so long.

Mrs. Chang seems to Wong to belong to a new type of middle-class, educated, English-speaking and savvy Chinese immigrant parents, examples of which she has encountered elsewhere among her family and personal friends. (The parents who gave Mr. Hinton a week in Hawaii would be another example.) In general, Chinatown-based Chinese immigrant parents from the working class had tended to be less informed about the school system, less involved in school activities, and more deferential to or trusting of teachers and aides, especially Chinese-speaking ones who could serve as interpreters and intermediaries. In contrast, Mrs. Chang and others like her, while sharing the former group's belief in the importance of education and expectations of high achievement in their children, were better informed about the school system and what it would take to do well in it. They were much more aggressive in their attempts to shepherd their children through, especially to take them out of ESL as quickly as possible. They probably also had less deference for American teachers but treated them as people who were there to do a job well for their children. In this context, it should be added that in recent years,

several Chinese-ancestry candidates were elected to school boards in surrounding school districts; and that some Chinese-language newspapers, such as the nationally-circulating *World Journal* in its Local News section, sometimes carry informational articles on the public school system. Thus even with minimal conversational English skills, these parents might gain considerable confidence in dealing with the school system and the teachers.

Toward the end of the second year, in April 1992, Matt and his family moved to a condominium in an as-yet-unfinished luxury highrise complex in Lagunita, a very affluent and prestigious community about 20-25 minutes' drive north of Cooperville. According to the Chinese grapevine (through Sandra Baxter), Matt was moving into regular English class in Huntington Middle School, one of the public 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade middle schools in Lagunita. When Zou obtained permission from Matt's father to complete the study by giving Matt the third language assessment at his new home, he found out that in fact, Matt was going into the ELD (i.e., ESL) program in the new school. Perhaps, in a "Chinese" fashion, Matt's parents were giving this impression to the teachers and aides at Cooperville Junior High so as to "give them face"; that is, Matt's moving to regular English was felt to be a "legitimate" reason for taking Matt out of the old school in the middle of the school year.

Audrey So

The only female focal student in the study, Audrey So was born in Taipei, Taiwan, and came to the U.S. at age 12, after completing elementary school and attending some "night school" in English. She came around July 1991 with her whole family: father, mother, and younger brother.

Audrey's father was a pastor who moved to the U.S. when he was offered a position in a Chinese community church. Her mother used to teach English at a university but was now a homemaker who did some volunteer work. She reported having plenty of opportunities to speak English at home and with other kids in the neighborhood. However, on another occasion she indicated that her father asked the kids to speak Taiwanese at home. On weekends, she spent time with her family as her busy pastor father caught up on family time. At school, she "hung out" mostly with other Chinese immigrant girls from both the mainland and Taiwan, among whom she was popular and on joking, teasing terms. She said she would use Taiwanese only when joking, reserving Mandarin for most of the other interactions. When asked about making friends with English speakers, Audrey, like Matt, expressed an interest in doing so. She did have at least one white girlfriend with whom she shared some classes; Zou repeatedly observed Audrey greeting her in the "quad." She didn't seem to have any African-American or Latina friends.

In person Audrey was sweet, well-bred, conscious of her good breeding; this role she played up quite well at least during the first year. Although not as eloquent as John or Martin, she was highly effective in Chinese and able to handle relationships with adults in complex ways. For example, in November 1992, when Zou was interviewing her, she showed two registers: a casual one used for her peers when they interrupted; a more intense or emotionally charged one used for Zou, to whom she had to be at once accommodating (because he had authority invested in him)

and aloof (because he was a relatively young male talking to an adolescent girl). In addition to verbal cues, Zou was made to feel acutely conscious of gender and age differences through her giggles and body language (signaling him to sit on the other side of an imaginary dividing line on the bench). The awkwardness of Zou mingling with teenage girls was commented upon by other girls as well, when they teasingly asked if he had to be addressed as *xiansheng*, which could mean "teacher" or "sir." The two years of the study was a period of rapid physical development for Audrey, which no doubt affected her in many ways, ranging from self-consciousness to mood swings.

Audrey got fluctuating grades and stayed at the low end of Mr. Hinton's ESL class by the end of the first year. (However, as mentioned above, when she was advanced to Mrs. Freeman's class, she was judged capable of doing without one Sheltered Core period.) Audrey was attentive in class, not as given to reading comics as many of her Taiwanese friends were. However, she was just not very motivated to learn English or do well in school. Zou hardly ever saw her using the dictionary, biligual or otherwise, in the classroom. She was more a listener than a questioner and never volunteered to take any of the "challenge questions" from Mr. Hinton. She was visible only when making a presentation, and even then she spoke in a low voice.

Of the three Taiwanese students remaining in the study after the first year, Audrey's Chinese showed the most deterioration, forgetting how to write a number of characters and resorting repeatedly to the romanization system used in Taiwan, comprised of non-roman symbols, colloquially known as *bopomofo*.

Audrey's true love was music—she was an accomplished pianist, played the cello, and was active in the school choir. Her stated ambition was to be a music teacher. It was telling that when asked by Zou to sum up her priorities in school, Audrey said, "talk to friends, sing in the choir." In March 1992 she reported typically doing half an hour of homework on math, forty minutes or so on English, but over an hour on music.

During the second year of the study, Audrey's compliance diminished, and she began resisting Zou's efforts to obtain writing samples from her. In October 1992, for example, she refused Zou's request for a spontaneous writing sample during lunch break, giving the excuse that she had to copy new vocabulary from a friend. It was only with a certain amount of awkward perseverance that Zou negotiated a compromise with her, postponing the meeting till the following week. At the next meeting, though, she flatly stated that she didn't want to be in the project anymore (having been given the choice to opt out by her father), and again Zou had to coax her into doing the writing, conceding to her request not to do any recording. By March 1993, she had become quite withdrawn from classroom activities, barely taking part in any group discussion, and in general growing more edgy and hostile. Once she screamed in Zou's face during a Language Assessment.

Audrey's parents, unlike the parents of the two other Taiwanese focal students, did not get much involved in "shepherding" her through school. Audrey reported that her father's pastoral duties took up a lot of his time; he was home only on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. If she had questions in English, she would ask her mother, but such tutoring took place only at Audrey's request. Apart from individual differences, one suspects that gender was one factor

in the relative lack of academic pressure placed on Audrey, compared to the other focal students. In general, the sons in a Chinese family are the ones expected to excel in school. In a way, the lower expectations placed on girls also created more "room" in which they are freer to pursue other interests. Certainly musical accomplishments could be as valuable an asset for a girl as good grades in school, and most appropriate for a pastor's family. Thus Audrey's musical talents might have shielded her from parental insistence on academic performance.

John Sun

John Sun was born in Taiwan of an educated family. He arrived in the U.S. in late August 1991 at the age of 12, after completing elementary school. He was the only one of the focal students who did not take any English before coming to the U.S. His parents were professors at a university in Taiwan. During the time of the study, his father held a visiting position at a prestigious private university nearby but was working on a research project in Japan; his mother was working on a degree in French in the Bay Area. John was living with his mother; he had a younger sister who was nine years old at the beginning of the study. Zou met John's mother once and heard her speak English to Mr. Hinton. He described her English as "broken" even though, according to John, she obtained her college degree in English in Taiwan.

Like Matt, John expressed relief that American teachers didn't mete out physical punishment for poor school work. His stated ambition was to be a marine biologist.

Zou described John Sun as very intelligent and articulate, mature in his word choice in Chinese and capable of dealing with a wide range of topics. But he was confident and careless in his classwork, showing mistakes that were many and varied. In general, he did well in school. Zou sat in on one of his High Math classes and found his performance to be as good as expected.

In person John was big and tall by Chinese standards. His physical confidence was probably as much a factor in English acquisition as his intelligence. He described himself as not particularly good in sports except for swimming, but he liked every sport and was in fact very active. Able to hold his own physically, he was sociable and popular among kids of all colors, with a touch of arrogance. Unlike the other three focal students, he did not "stick to" his Chinese immigrant students. At the time of the First Language Assessment, John was the only one who could carry on a minimal conversation in English. When asked about learning English, he said that as long as one mixed with white boys, one's English wouldn't be too bad. Thus, although he was identified by Sandra Baxter as having close to zero English upon arrival in the U.S. (along with Martin Zhang), John acquired spoken English faster than his more passive peers. By the end of the first year, Sandra Baxter held a high opinion of his school performance in general as well as of his aggressiveness in interpersonal contact. His style of handling difficulties in class was also very "verbal": when confronted with a new word, whereas Matt Chang would use a dictionary and Audrey So would probably not care, John would ask the teacher orally. Zou hardly ever saw him using a dictionary in class.

As the study progressed into the second year, John Sun grew bigger physically and became more and more sullen and fractious, paying little attention to

schoolwork. When mildly reprimanded by Mrs. Garcia for chatting too much, he talked back and went back to work only after insistence on her part. By spring of 1993, he openly defied Mrs. Garcia by not doing homework and going against instructions when doing in-class exercises. He became kind of the ringleader of the five boys remaining in Mrs. Garcia's class by this time, setting an example of "acting up" for the smaller and less assertive boys. Toward the end of the 8th grade, with both the vacation and the impending move of the ESL program approaching, it seemed that Mrs. Garcia was only trying to keep the class from falling apart. Her behavior toward John Sun was excessively tolerant, even allowing him to make a joke at her expense.

John objected openly to Zou's request for interviews and writing samples, complaining about the boring questions and wanting to know long the project would continue. He used the excuse of having to complete work for the teacher to avoid an interview, and had to be flattered and coaxed before he would cooperate. In order to augment his authority, Zou had to talk to him in English.

John Sun's mother was not as aggressive as Matt Chang's in "shepherding," but she was apparently in touch with the teachers when she came to pick John up, and was most likely behind John's "campaign" to move out of Sheltered Core. In Spring 1993, apparently affected by two events—his buddy Dan's move into Regular Core; and fellow focal student Matt Chang's move to a middle school in Lagunita, ostensibly to the non-ESL track—John grew increasingly restless in Mrs. Garcia's class. Zou found that John had gotten to know the teacher in regular Core during a school trip to Yosemite. Capitalizing on his good spoken English and interpersonal skills, he expressed a strong interest in moving out of Sheltered Core and gained that teacher's sympathy for the cause. However, Mrs. Garcia refused to let him move. Finally, in late 1993, Mrs. Sun came to the school to talk to Mrs. Garcia. The teacher pointed to the fact that although John was speaking English quite confidently and was reading adequately, his writing skills needed improving; while he was getting A's in other classes, he was still getting C's and D's in ESL. Also, in terms of his behavior, he was barely doing any work in ESL now; Mrs. Garcia felt that if she let him move on to regular English now, it would be giving John the message that he could get his way by "striking." (She told Zou that John no longer considered her somebody he could learn from.) The lobbying was not successful, despite John's mother's involvement.

Martin Zhang

Martin Zhang was born in Shanghai in the People's Republic of China. His father was a technician, his mother, a primary school teacher of English. After immigration, both his parents took jobs in a nearby Chinese grocery store, one of the new "megastores" serving the upscale Silicon Valley Chinese professionals; his mother later apparently became a domestic—in Martin's words, she "work in somebody's home." Thus they both experienced "downward occupational mobility." For a year before immigration, Martin attended an elite middle school in Shanghai—a *zhongdian zhongxue*, or "key middle school," one of the top ten in Shanghai. He started studying English in the fourth grade. He arrived in the U.S. in July 1991, at age 13. Though scoring at Level 1 for oral skills and "none" for reading

and writing when tested by the school district, Martin actually had some basic English skills at arrival.

Because Zou is from Shanghai as well and speaks Martin's dialect, which made a great difference in the latter's reactions to the researcher, at least initially. When first approached, Martin Zhang was guarded, even rude, interrupting Zou to make lunch arrangements when the latter was conversing with another student. However, as soon as Zou had a chance to speak to him in Shanghainese, Martin's attitude changed: he stopped categorizing Zou with the adults and became quite open with him. Moreover, when he found out that Zou's old Shanghai address was rather close to his, he became even less defensive.

When speaking in Chinese, Martin was fluent and confident, using sophisticated idioms and sentence structures; in English, by contrast, he was much more uncertain. Still, he was eager to use English. Before he became a "written-off" "trouble-maker," he talked a lot to Zou in English. Zou noted that he had a pretty large English vocabulary, combined with very poor grammar and syntax, so that he was really not making much sense. This mastery of vocabulary dissociated from overall language proficiency might be partially explained by the method of English teaching still prevalent in China, which emphasized the learning of vocabulary lists. (Martin Zhang's mother taught primary-school English in China and might have reinforced this method.) Mr. Hinton's teaching approach, as explained below, probably didn't help either, since he also taught vocabulary acquisition in a decontextualized manner.

Of the focal students, Martin Zhang was the only mainlander, the others being from Taiwan. To Zou, he expressed his dislike of Taiwan students, who probably thought mainlanders in general backward and impoverished. The feeling was mutual: several times Zou saw him trying to extricate himself from scuffles with Taiwanese boys. Martin was also from the lowest socioeconomic background of the focal group, both before and after immigration. While his Taiwan friends were picked up by parents in their family cars, Martin had to bike home; they brought expensive Game Boys to school while Martin had no such toys. He was quite conscious of these class differences. Martin poked fun at his Taiwanese peers by saying that he could always judge how long a Taiwanese had been in the U.S. by how dark he looked ("dark" in Chinese connoting working-class status)—thus participating in the kind of class bias from which he himself suffered. (Post-Mao China actually encouraged consciousness of class and cultural prestige, reversing the elevation of workers/peasants and denigration of intellectuals rampant during the Cultural Revolution.) He was also very aware that his parents had high expectations of him. It must have been quite discouraging for him to move from a "key middle school" in Shanghai to an American school in which none of his previous status and achievements was recognized. Virtually overnight, from being a member of an elite, he became a low-level ESL student with much-diminished prospects for "shining" and pleasing his parents. The fact that, during initial placement testing upon enrollment in Cooperville Junior High, Martin's parent/guardian assessed his Chinese proficiency to be "below average" might also suggest that he was subjected to rather harsh pressures. According to Zou, his Chinese was actually quite advanced.

Adding to Martin's stress was the fact that his parents entered the U.S. as tourists and stayed on illegally (which probably accounted for their undesirable jobs). Throughout the first year of the study, rumors about his family's visa problem filtered through the aide, Sandra Baxter, who knew a lot from what the students told her. His parents were thinking of moving him to another school to obtain a student visa so he could stay in status. Martin did not report to Cooperville Junior High at the beginning of the second academic year (Fall 1992), apparently for that reason.

At the beginning of the study, Martin was lively, outgoing, confident, aggressive; he had an opinion on everything. He appreciated the spacious school facilities and play areas, noting that in Shanghai students had to work in subzero weather with no indoor heating, and that they had no computers like here. He also liked having more room at home. When asked his priorities his school, he mentioned "studying English." He showed some contempt for the low level of math in American junior high schools, which was too easy for him. He expressed a lot of ambition; when asked about his future, instead of naming an occupation, he said he wanted to *churen toudi*, or "rise head and shoulders above other people." A short boy, he usually sat in the front of Mr. Hinton's class (he might have been a little myopic too). He was eager to secure the attention and approval of adults.

However, for a combination of reasons, he performed badly in school and became a "trouble-maker" who acted out a lot. In addition to the family stresses mentioned above, he probably suffered a great blow to his self-esteem when he that found his performance in the elite Shanghai school was of little help in his new environment. He might have harbored resentment toward English learning, which he knew he needed but was so frustrating. It is interesting to note that Martin managed to pick up Cantonese from his Cantonese-speaking friends in school within a couple of months of arrival, which suggested that he didn't lack language-learning ability in general but probably felt a psychological block about learning English. Furthermore, Sandra Baxter disliked him and judged him a failure early on. She complained about Martin's "lack of honesty," by which she meant that whenever Sandra Baxter asked whether he understood a question, he would say "Yes, yes." "God knows whether he really understands anything," said Sandra Baxter. It might seem surprising that Sandra Baxter, a fellow Chinese immigrant who might have been empathetic, was so harsh toward Martin as to attribute dishonesty to a common coping response of a newcomer. However, Taiwan (and Hong Kong) immigrants do tend to look down upon mainlanders, and Sandra Baxter in particular had a tendency to consider good English and Westernized manners a sign of superiority. She might also find Martin's aggressive personality a nuisance.

Martin's performance in Mr. Hinton's class fluctuated wildly between 50s and 90s, sometimes ranking at the bottom of the class. He was generally seen as a low-achiever who didn't follow instructions, talked too much, and acted disrespectful. During the first semester, he got into a traffic accident and was arrested by the police twice. He continued to deteriorate until, by the end of the first school year, he looked dispirited and didn't speak much even when approached. After he had left

Cooperville Junior High, some students said he was seen renting pornographic videotapes in a Chinese video rental outlet.

THE FIRST YEAR

"English Language Development": Mr. Hinton's Class

Observations were conducted in Mr. Hinton's morning newcomer class. He also taught a similar afternoon class, which by his own admission was more rowdy and less organized because "by then everybody was tired." The morning class more accurately represented his best efforts at a well-run class.

Mr. Hinton was responsible for the "brand new" newcomers entering both 7th grade and 8th grade. In his own jovial wording, "There's no pigeonholing; we kick them out as soon as possible." In a room holding 30 comfortably, class size, beginning in the low 20s, fluctuated throughout the year, as some students left and others were added (see above on "Program"). The principal personages in the classroom were Mr. Hinton and his Mandarin-speaking aide, Mrs. Sandra Baxter, of whom more later.

Mr. Hinton's Background and Approach to ESL Teaching

Mr. Hinton can best be described as a highly experienced practitioner of the audiolingual or structural method. Formerly a Special Education teacher for seven years, he felt his Special Ed experience was "excellent preparation" for ESL: "You do the same things, except you go 40 times faster." He told me that he was a few units short of an M.A. in TESL. However, he was clearly expertly trained in the audiolingual method, even though he preferred to describe himself as "eclectic" and did employ other methods, such as a modified version of Total Physical Response. He showed some (not always well-informed) awareness of newer research and methodology. A remark that he made at one of our first meetings—equating "Krashen's natural order" with the "listen, say, read, and write" sequence he employed in his classroom—was indicative of his propensities.

Though he was only a few years from retirement, Mr. Hinton said he would still like to get an M.A. someday. He seemed pleased to be an object of attention from UC Berkeley and expressed an interest in being observed as a master-teacher by student-teachers. Of the three ESL teachers in the project, he was the most eager to articulate and discuss his teaching philosophy. He seemed to look at Wong as a fellow professional (because of her M.A. in TESL) with whom he could "talk shop" but who also had the prestige of being from a research university like Berkeley. On the other hand, in spite of Wong's repeated reassurances that the focus of the study was the students' writing development, he appeared anxious that his teaching was being evaluated. Because of Mr. Hinton's attitude on this point, it was difficult for Wong to fend off his constant attempts to seek validation on his teaching philosophy/method and on his generalizations about students from various ethnic groups. This problem abated somewhat when Zou took over the classroom visits and observations. However, there were still occasions when Mr. Hinton called upon Zou as an authority on more "academic" issues.

Mr. Hinton obviously had the respect and admiration of his aides, Sandra Baxter and Donna Trevor, both of whom volunteered information about how successful he was as an ESL teacher. Apparently some former students now doing well in regular classes would still come back to talk to Mr. Hinton, sometimes to seek his help. He had an "open-door" policy, making himself accessible to any student who needed him. There was no doubt that he was a dedicated and caring teacher, one who often skipped lunch to help his students. Donna Trevor called his ESL "the best in the county." On the other hand, in speaking with the School District administrator who helped arrange this study, I got the impression that he was regarded as effective but somewhat idiosyncratic: good at "doing his own thing" but somewhat out of touch with the latest trends in ESL.

Mr. Hinton's approach to teaching the ESL students was teacher-centered; he exercised a high degree of control over the material and the classroom interactions. He was strict with his requirements but not punitive; his demeanor was fatherly, encouraging, friendly. For example, one time when some male students came in late, he spoke to them firmly, asking them to talk to him after class, but did not otherwise impose any other penalty or humiliate them in public. When speaking to his students, Mr. Hinton frequently used the casual, back-slapping type of expressions like *chief, attaboy, my good man* for the boys, *gal* and *attagirl* for the girls, or *kiddo* for both; generally acting like an enthusiastic coach teasing, coaxing and urging his charges to better performance. (He did slap the boys' backs too!) At times he treated the more advanced students like prized specimens to be exhibited in front of the researchers, to demonstrate how well they could do. The researchers found this not a little embarrassing; as for the students, because of their general social awkwardness, it was hard to tell whether they felt somewhat mortified to be put on display.

The classroom was arranged in the traditional manner, with the teacher up front and paired seats in rows filling up the room. There was one blackboard up front and another on the hallway side of the classroom, opposite a bank of windows; both blackboards were used heavily. A small number of computers were along the hallway wall, and cupboards for school supplies were in the back as well as below the windows. Sandra Baxter's desk was at the back, where she could work in a low voice with students who needed special help.

For his materials, Mr. Hinton used an adaptation of the IDEA series on which he had worked hard for two years. Sandra Baxter said that during that period he got up every morning at 4 or 4:30 a.m. to rewrite the material for junior high use. He was obviously very proud of this work and repeatedly showed the modified IDEA folders to me. He also used Addison-Wesley's *New Horizons in English*, an older, structure-based series not much used by younger ESL teachers.

True to his philosophy, Mr. Hinton did all his teaching in what he called a "scaled down, step by step" manner, though the four skills were highly integrated and could not easily be isolated in separate descriptions. In the following account, an effort will be made to emphasize features particularly relevant to the teaching of writing.

Mr. Hinton organized each week rigidly, "so that the kids would know what to expect."

Monday: spelling and phonics; story and spelling lists given out
Tuesday: same as above plus exercise based on story
Wednesday: trial test for verbs only
Thursday: composition
Friday: vocabulary and dictation test

A special feature of Hinton's system was a spiral notebook that every student had to keep. All material from the blackboard—word lists, sentences, illustrations of grammar—was to be copied into the notebook. In addition, students did all their in-class exercises, tests, and homework in the notebook. Each piece must be labeled clearly according to Mr. Howard's system, by type, unit and day of the week. For example, homework from *New Horizons* would be labeled H1:1, H2:2, etc. Again, Mr. Hinton emphasized the importance of letting students know exactly what to expect; there was also the advantage of allowing him to quickly detect which piece of work was missing. Mr. Hinton was proud of this system: he saw the spiral notebook as each student's personalized reference book, a foundation on which to build further language skills. He said that some of his former students continued to refer to their spiral notebooks.

Lessons based on IDEA were organized by topic, e.g., family, greetings, address and phone, school environment, food, colors, basic numbers, weights and measures, directions, money, etc. Categories were pre-assigned with no input from students, and made no references to current events. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing were all built around a given topic. Emphasis was on oral language development.

When a word or a sentence structure was introduced, Mr. Hinton would use a great deal of simplified English as well as body language to explain the meaning ("props" or actual objects were apparently seldom used). Then he would ask the class to say it out loud. Choral repetition was the standard practice, but sometimes answers were elicited from individual students. Those who came up with especially good answers (e.g., a word that nobody else knew) got rewards: a point marked next to his/her name on the blackboard. A number of points could be redeemed for ice cream or coke or some other treat. At times either Mr. Hinton or Sandra Baxter would run "auctions" for candy, soda, etc. where students would use up points in their "bank accounts." After oral pattern drills, including occasional, on-the-spot units on pronunciation (e.g., discrimination between *l* and *r*, as called for by vocabulary words), students would be asked to do writing assignments.

The "listen, speak, read, write" sequence was occasionally enlivened by physical activities and games. For example, when teaching introductions among acquaintances during the fall semester of the first year, Mr. Hinton set up role play situations involving him, the aide Sandra Baxter, and the students. Once Mr. Hinton played a Total Physical Response-type game in which he called out commands—"Turn left," "Turn 180 degree," "walk forward three steps," etc.—and anyone making a mistake had to sit down. After a while he allowed students to take over the commands. Students seemed extremely excited about a chance to let loose, to giggle and cheer and make noise. Small group work was not frequent. Sometimes students worked in pairs, e.g., rehearsing a simple dialog that they then had to read

aloud in front of the class. Response by both performers and audience to such a rigidly controlled event was considerably less enthusiastic.

Mr. Hinton often set up competitive games in an effort to encourage better performance. For example, after doing a reading assignment, he would ask the students to close their books, then march up and down the aisles calling on students by name to answer his questions about the reading. The names of those who did well were put up on the blackboard. The names of the poor respondents were not, but still attention would have been called to their inability to answer.

Mr. Hinton placed a great deal of emphasis on vocabulary development in the form of word lists. The main blackboard in front, used for current teaching, was usually filled with columns of related words arranged by topic, e.g., nouns for eating utensils, nouns for pets, nouns for fruits and nuts, verbs for describing daily routines. The side blackboard was for more permanent display of useful but less topical words, such as opposites. Each column was kept distinct; there was no mixing of categories. In the way there were visually presented, words were stripped of their contexts.

Mr. Hinton had a tolerant attitude toward the use of native languages in the classroom. Dictionaries, including bilingual dictionaries, were allowed. Students could scribble glosses next to the English words in their readings, or use the dictionary to translate when doing writing assignments. Quiet talking between students was allowed, even when the native language was used. Sandra Baxter, the Mandarin-speaking aide, used Mandarin to help students from Taiwan and mainland China. Mr. Hinton himself knew Spanish—apparently spoke it quite fluently—and would sometimes discipline Spanish-speaking students in that language, or give them quick translations of things they didn't understand.

Mr. Hinton's Attitude Toward Chinese- and Spanish-Speakers

In this connection, it is worth noting that, like Mr. Akers, the principal, Mr. Hinton appeared to have some special feeling toward the Chinese because of family history. He told Zou that his sister was born in China, and that his father, a U.S. naval officer, carried out missions in different parts of the world. Mr. Hinton's partiality toward the Chinese in particular, as well as Asians in general, was clear right from the start. During Wong's first meeting with Mr. Akers and the three ESL teachers to discuss the project, when she mentioned that the Cooperville Unified School District was well-known to Chinese immigrant parents, Mr. Hinton said, "I love the Chinese families here—they're so supportive." During Wong's visits to his classroom, Mr. Hinton repeatedly made the same point, citing the parents of John Sun and another Taiwan student as examples of how Chinese families supported teachers: "teachers can only do so much." In January of 1992, after coming back from Christmas vacation, Mr. Hinton told Zou that the parents of one of his students from Taiwan gave him a week in Hawaii over the break, exclaiming, "The Chinese really respect teachers." Both Wong and Zou were struck by his enthusiasm toward the Chinese students but both also detected a condescending or paternalistic attitude in the way he talked about them.

In contrast, despite his knowledge of Spanish, Mr. Hinton didn't think much of the Spanish-speaking students in his class. He felt that they "don't go anywhere,

they're lazy, they don't want to study." He attributed it to the culture, the lack of expectations from the student's family, the lack of bonding with adults. "The Spanish speakers [in his class] are dying inch by inch because the others are moving so fast." As a result, they were not "ready to fly out of the 'pigeon coop'" when the door was opened, i.e., they were not ready to move out of ESL. There were two Mexican-American girls in his class who had been there at least a year already when the study began; they were treated as almost hopeless cases by both the teacher and the aide, sometimes left to be tutored by the most advanced students. Mr. Hinton and Sandra Baxter both shared the belief that cultural differences accounted for the superiority of Chinese students and the retardation of Spanish-speakers. Both turned to Wong during her visit to confirm this, and she had to dodge the issue by saying "That's what we are trying to determine through the study," which was not quite an accurate description but a useful on-the-spot rejoinder that would deflect further pressure on that question.

Parenthetically, it should be mentioned that Mr. Hinton and Sandra Baxter were not the only teaching staff at Cooperville Junior High who seemed to be prejudiced against Spanish speakers. In the Math classroom of Mr. Baines, which Zou observed in February 1992, when a Spanish-speaking boy repeatedly tried to take part in the bidding at a "candy auction," Mr. Baines sneeringly said "You don't have that kind of money [i.e., accumulated "points" for good performance in class, which students could then "cash in" for treats]." In terms of seating arrangements in that classroom, while a small mixed group of LEP students sat in the left front, white girls sat in the center front; white boys sat in the middle rows; while black girls and Hispanic boys sat in the back. Whether the seats were teacher-assigned or self-selected, this kind of clustering by race suggested that Hispanics and blacks were at a greater distance from the teacher, or more marginal.

Since the study was not meant to examine the influence of teacher attitude toward ethnic groups as a factor in the students' progress in ESL, the above observation was offered merely to complete the picture of Mr. Hinton and the atmosphere in his classroom. Given a different research design, it would have been interesting to investigate the Spanish-speakers in conjunction with the Chinese-speakers in the same instructional setting. As it stood, we would only point out that while Mr. Hinton had a generally tolerant policy on native language use, not all language groups were regarded with the same supportive attitude.

Aide Sandra Baxter

At this point, it might be appropriate to say a few more words about Sandra Baxter, whose language attitudes might also have an effect on the students, especially the Chinese ones. Mrs. Baxter, as she was called in the classroom, was a Taiwanese woman in her 30's who married a Caucasian. Because she spoke both Taiwanese and Mandarin, she was frequently called upon by Mr. Hinton to translate and explain things to Chinese students, although she also helped students of other backgrounds. Thus her presence as helper and intermediary was quite important to the Chinese speakers. A talkative woman, she also served as a kind of "clearing house" for all kinds of gossip related to the students, their families, and the school personnel, which she was always eager to share with Wong and Zou.

In speaking with both Wong and Zou, Sandra Baxter often expressed envy of their fluent, relatively native-like English, and a corresponding apologetic attitude toward her own often uncertain command of English. (Even though she spoke quite fluently, her grasp of details of grammar or idiom was shaky. For example, she would mix up *confusing* and *confused*, *overwhelming* and *overwhelmed*, apparently without realizing that she had done so, as she never stopped to correct herself on these points.) She also felt somewhat inferior for having "stopped using her brain" after marriage, and saw Wong, with her college career teaching literature in English, as occupying an enviable position. Every now and then, Mr. Hinton brought up the subject of her getting a teaching credential, half-teasingly urging her to give it a try, but Sandra Baxter seemed unconvinced that she was good enough.

From various comments that she let drop in comparing herself with the researchers, one could see Sandra Baxter showing a kind of "colonial mentality" that somehow equated speaking good English and acting assimilated with being more advanced, or generally more meritorious and desirable as a person. This attitude was not uncommon among immigrants from Taiwan who grew up on the island in the 1950s and 1960s under strong American cultural influence. In Mr. Hinton's classroom, the tendency of hers, coupled with a high regard for social "respectability," translated to a hierarchical view of the Chinese speakers in the class: the more assimilated-seeming students (or those showing a potential for being highly assimilated, such as those from academic families) were treated more nicely than those with "backward" traits. This became very clear in the contempt she held for Martin Zhang, the focal student from mainland China, which many Taiwan people saw as lagging far behind Taiwan in economic development and cultural sophistication. This attitude was also reflected in her impatience with and disdain for Spanish-speakers, as described above. While it would be impossible, given the current research design, to demonstrate any direct connection between Sandra Baxter's language attitudes and the students' learning of English, it stands to reason that the Chinese-speaking students, especially at this socially sensitive adolescent stage, must be able to sense something of her negative global judgment toward "poor English."

The Teaching of Writing in Mr. Hinton's Classroom

Now to turn specifically to the teaching of writing: Writing done in Mr. Hinton's classroom was highly, one might say exclusively, structured. Before the exercise, Mr. Hinton would ask the students to repeat back how many lines and how many paragraphs were supposed to be in the composition. Uniformity was enforced; students were not supposed to deviate from the assignment in either content or format.

The simplest form of writing was copying. Students were expected to copy word lists, sentences, etc. from the blackboard. For example, in the unit on weights and measures, Mr. Hinton wrote the following on the blackboard:

1 ft. = _____ in.
1 yd. = _____ ft.
1 yd. = _____ in.

1 mi. = _____ yd.
1 lb. = _____ oz.
1 T. = _____ lb.

(He subsequently explained that T. might be confusing, because in cooking class T. = tablespoon.) He elicited the correct numbers from the class orally: "One foot equals twelve inches," "one yard equals three feet," etc., sometimes in a group, sometimes individually. Then students wrote everything down in their spiral notebooks.

Some writing exercises involved pictures. For example, on a worksheet, students filled in a list corresponding to numbered items in a diagram of a place setting (10/22/91).

1. *plate*
2. *napkin*
3. *knife*
4. *fork* [. . . and so on]

Fill-in-the-blank exercises were also done on grammatical categories. For example, in a review of the forms of common irregular verbs, Mr. Hinton would list them in three columns on the blackboard:

have	had	had
come	came	come
run	ran	run
go	went	gone
fight	fought	fought
fly	flew	flown
feel	felt	felt
put	put	put
make	made	made
wear	wore	worn

Then he erased some words and had the students fill them in by recitation, sometimes having one person come up to write down a word so he could check spelling (11/5/91).

A more advanced form of fill-in-the-blank writing exercises involved groups of sentences linked by content; the initial letter or letters of vocabulary to be drilled were included in the blanks as prompts. The following is a sample worksheet entitled "Symptoms and Injuries."

1. I have a bad cold. I have a *h*_____, a *f*____, a sore *th*____, a *c*_____ and a _____ nose. I can't stop *sn*_____.
2. I have the flu. I have a ____ __ ___ chest. I have a *st*_____, and I might *v*____. I feel cold. I have the *ch*____.
3. I stayed in the sun too long. I have a bad sunburn and t*bl*_____.

4. I was in an accident. I have a *br*____ leg, a *sp*_____ ankle, and a *tw*_____ knee. I'm black and blue from the *br*_____.
   —Get better _____.
   —See you _____.
5. Mom, I ___ my finger with a knife and I _____ my finger on the stove.
   —Here's a bandaid to stop the _____.

Lists of questions and answers moved students beyond word lists, but were still highly structured. In a unit on family, a question was asked of each family member and an answer had to be filled in:

Where does your father work?
He works _____.

No provision was made for cases where the father was not around or was not working; whether this was an actual problem was not clear, since none of the students raised the question. It seemed understood by all that relevance to real life was not the point. When some students gave meaningful and grammatically correct answers such as:

He works on a ship.
He works in a building.

Mr. Hinton rejected them, saying, "We need something we can look up in the phone book" [i.e., an address].

At times, the lack of real-life relevance created humor. For example, during an exercise to change declarative sentences into interrogative ones, students found themselves saying things like "My husband usually stays in bed until 1 p.m. on Sunday" and ended up giggling and twisting and turning in their seats. However, the momentary animation was not enough to offset an overall sense of boredom and detachment setting in.

An example of controlled composition beyond lists involved prompts on the blackboard, which students would complete as sentences in their notebooks (10/17/91). Thus:

I have a _____.
It is _____.
It likes to _____.

I have a *cat*.
It is *white*.
It likes to *jump*.

Mr. Hinton made it clear that everyone had to write about pets: "Now you can't say, 'I don't have a pet.' Everybody has one in his head—you just pretend." When some

students did not understand *pretend*, he told them to look the word up in their bilingual dictionaries.

A lengthier variation of this exercise involved, first, sample sentences on the blackboard to teach correct sentence structure (without using grammatical terminology), then about 30 minutes of writing by students modeled upon the samples. At the end of the class, students were called out in small groups, and each read aloud a short, multi-sentence narrative:

My father is banker.
He go to work at 8.
He likes to play golf.
He likes pet.
My father take me out on Sunday.

Mr. Hinton repeated the sentences that contained grammatical errors and asked the class to correct them: "He _____ [miming blank, looking to the class to supply the third person singular form] to work at 8?" In the meantime, the author stood in front of the class looking embarrassed.

An example of features that Mr. Hinton had apparently designed specifically for junior high students (not just taken from IDEA) was a list of "infractions" that students needed to understand and avoid. In his words, "They need to know enough English to follow rules and instructions. These are needed for survival, for example, when they go on field trips." The infractions were listed on the blackboard:

interrupting
tardy
fooling around
disobeying
using bad words, etc.

Then Mr. Hinton wrote out a list of situations to be matched with the infractions:

Radu danced on his desk. Radu is *fooling around.*

After the oral exercise, students did its written counterpart on a worksheet. The top part of the worksheet listed offenses; the bottom part listed examples of situations, with blanks next to them to be filled in with the names of the offenses. (Note that, despite Mrs. Hinton's focus on structure, the items on "list of offenses" were not uniform in terms of grammatical category: in a list of gerunds, *bad words* was used instead of *using bad words; tardy* instead of *being tardy.*)

INFRACTIONS

LIST OF OFFENSES

Bad words
Profanity

Disobeying
Fighting
Fooling around
Interrupting
Shouting
Talking back
Tardy
Teasing - "Put-downs"
Tripping

EXAMPLES

1. Three minutes late _____
2. Jumped from bench to bench _____
3. Loud talking _____
4. Made fun of another student _____
5. Told the coach, "I *didn't* do it!" _____
6. Said something very dirty _____
7. Hit a boy in the stomach _____
8. Made a student fall down using the foot _____
9. After the whistle, did not stop playing _____
10. Talked while the coach was talking _____

With Mr. Hinton's encouragement Wong circulated as a kind of aide during the writing component in a couple of classes. The Chinese students were shy about asking for help, and when they did so all the questions concerned correctness of form: "Is this right?" They appeared anxious about creating error-free sentences, constantly erasing and writing over, with little concern for meaning or expression. This was in keeping with the expectations of Mr. Hinton. Perhaps because Sandra Baxter was already available to provide native-language assistance and a "Chinese presence," the presence of Wong as yet another Chinese-speaking adult (a stranger at that), looming over their spiral notebooks, seemed to make the students more tense rather than more relaxed.

There was no noticeable change in Mr. Hinton's teaching over the first two semesters of the study (fall 1991, spring 1992): students did more and more of the same types of work. For example, on 2/26/92, Mr. Hinton taught the names for parts of the automobile. After giving students a chance to memorize the terms, he divided the class into teams for a contest. He gave a clue and students had to shout out the correct answer; the winning team got candy. There was momentary excitement, and perhaps learning the fine points of the automobile represented a deeper exploration of American culture than learning colors and numbers. However, in terms of overall English language development, for those students who were with Mr. Hinton from the beginning of the school year, they were essentially doing the same memorization work with isolated bits of language that they had been doing for the last six months. The changes in topic gave the appearance of movement, but there was in fact little sense of cumulative progress.

At this point Zou noted in his field notes that a "certain numbness" had set in even "on the part of some of the best prepared and most motivated students."

In noting the flagging interest of the class, **it cannot be overemphasized that as far as the audiolingual approach was concerned, Mr. Hinton was an expert, one might say exemplary, practitioner**, having perfected his classroom techniques to such an extent that they had become second nature. Thus it was not from lack of professionalism or dedication on his part that his students began to feel mired. The investigators are not concerned with evaluating his effectiveness as a classroom teacher. Rather, their interest is in the assumptions that appear to underlie his teaching, especially his teaching of writing. These assumptions are hardly peculiar to him as an older teacher trained in an earlier era. If anything, various versions of them are commonly heard in today's public debates about the influx of immigrant students in American classrooms and the best way of educating them.

Mr. Hinton's teaching of ESL reflected certain tenets of the audiolingual approach, with some modification (e.g., tolerating the native language); his teaching of writing was consonant with these tenets.

> NEP or LEP status is a kind of deficiency comparable to the disabilities addressed by Special Ed programs.
>
> An ESL program should move newcomer students as quickly as possible through this deficient stage.
>
> Lack of proficiency in oral English skills indicates a general lack of proficiency in English. Students should move methodically according to a "listen, speak, read, write" sequence.
>
> The ESL classroom should provide a highly structured, predictable environment where all exposure to and use of English is highly controlled and simplified whenever deemed necessary. This would minimize confusion and error.
>
> Students should be prevented from producing English output beyond the prescribed structures, so that they would not get frustrated from overtaxing their limited English skills.
>
> Second-language teaching is a matter of stimulus-response. The ESL teacher's task is to pre-select the most useful categories of stimuli (by topic or by grammatical structure), break down the language into small segments, teach these segments thoroughly through repetition, and make sure that they are mastered before moving students on to the next level.
>
> Allowing the use of the students' native languages in the classroom is a something of a benevolent gesture, to provide a sense of security to the newcomers during the transition period.
>
> Otherwise, the native language is not seen as relevant to English learning. No attempt is made to ascertain if the newcomers have literacy and academic skills in the native language; and if so, what they are and how they can be built upon.
>
> Writing development is seen as less crucial than oral language development at the newcomer stage. Its functions are to aid retention of vocabulary, reinforce grammatical structures, and provide a record of

previous learning for future reference. In terms of classroom management, writing tasks provide a quieter time when both teacher and students are relieved from the stress of stimulus-response performing.

In designing writing topics, focus is again on practicing structure. Concern for relevance to the students' non-classroom life or "real life" is an unnecessary distraction.

Students are not expected to be concerned with self-expression. Lack of full command of simple English structures is equated with lack of intellectual readiness to write about self-selected topics.

The assumptions of the audiolingual method, on which Mr. Hinton based his teaching, have long been subjected to theoretical and practical critique, which need not be rehearsed here. The horse of audiolingualism is obviously not completely dead. On the other hand, whether to beat it further is less interesting to the investigators than the question of how Mr. Hinton's assumptions are put into question, sometimes even contradicted, by some of the writing samples from the Chinese-speaking students. This issue will be discussed below in connection with the writing samples collected from the focal students.

THE SECOND YEAR

As mentioned above, upon exit from Mr. Hinton's ELD class, the focal students were directed into two Sheltered Core classes, taught by Mrs. Fielding and Mrs. Garcia respectively. Audrey So, the least advanced of the focal students, stayed in Mrs. Fielding's Sheltered Core class the whole year. Matt Chang was assigned to her class part of the time at the beginning and then moved entirely to Mrs. Garcia's. John Sun placed directly into Mrs. Garcia's class after ELD. Because of the logistical problem of dividing his limited visiting time, Zou ended up observing more of Mrs. Garcia's class, where two of the three remaining focal students were, so the data on Mrs. Fielding's teaching of writing were much more limited.

The two Sheltered Core classes were run quite differently, as the following account will show. It should be mentioned, however, that there were cabinets in the classrooms where old materials were stored and the two teachers did share some of them.

A Note on Computer Use

It should also be added that each of the three classrooms—Mr. Hinton's, Mrs. Fielding's, and Mrs. Garcia's—had 3-4 computers placed to the side of the rooms. They were ostensibly there to teach essay-editing, and to facilitate group projects with input from several students. Also, teachers could store name lists and grades on the computer. However, in practice, the machines were never used to full capacity and never truly integrated into the teaching of English, even at the Sheltered Core level. For example, both teachers would assign a particularly noisy or a particularly slow kid to the computer, so as to get him/her "out of the class." (Mr. Hinton had acted similarly, as well as assigned computer time as a reward for the good performers.)

Only the 12 or so computers in the library had software for sophisticated graphics. Occasionally students would be taken to the library to learn word-processing on these better machines, in which case the librarian would be the one instructing (issuing word-processing commands—"If you hit such-and-such a key, you will get such-and-such a screen") and the ESL teacher would be the one keeping order.

Obviously, if the number of computers available was limited and students had to share or travel to another room, using them would be more of a "hassle." But an equally, if not more, important reason why computers were not integrated more fully into teaching ESL was that the teachers themselves were not well trained to handle computers. Mrs. Fielding, one of whose other subjects was actually computers, was more comfortable than the other two teachers. But even so she did not assign computer work to the group very often, and at the one computer class observed by Zou, she actually had a Taiwanese student do the demonstrations of Hypercard for her. Quite often, some of the students, especially the Chinese ones from Silicon Valley professional families, outstripped the teachers in computer literacy and would get bored, fool around with the graphics programs, or show off instead of following along or concentrating on writing and editing.

"SHELTERED CORE": MRS. FIELDING'S CLASS

Mrs. Fielding's Background and Approach to ESL Teaching

Mrs. Fielding had been teaching ESL in some capacity for three years when Zou began visiting her classes in Fall 1992 but had obtained her teaching credential in ESL only the year before. Until this year, Mrs. Fielding had been teaching the ESL Lab for Mrs. Garcia. However, when Mrs. Garcia's Sheltered Core got too large, Mrs. Fielding took over one group, teaching the less advanced students. Overall, Mrs. Fielding did not seem to have as much experience and seniority as Mrs. Garcia, and the relationship between the two Sheltered Core teachers was somewhat strained.

Before working at Cooperville Junior High, Mrs. Fielding had taught English as a foreign language in Germany and Korea when her husband, a military man, was stationed there. Whether she had any additional experience in TESL was unclear. She said she really felt for her ESL students because once, when the family was in Germany, her son came home in tears because nobody else in school spoke English.

Apparently Mrs. Fielding did not teach for a living. She seemed a somewhat less "professional" ESL teacher than either Mr. Hinton or Mrs. Garcia. She did not seem to adhere to any well-defined "methodology," nor did she articulate a definite "teaching philosophy" for ESL students. Sometimes she did not appear very sure of her spelling; once she misspelled *presenter* as *presentor*, but checked the dictionary and immediately corrected herself. This was something that neither Mr. Hinton nor Mrs. Garcia would be likely to do. Nevertheless, she had her own personal style. As a well-traveled former military wife who had been exposed to different cultures, she had a certain confident, sophisticated air about her.

A Chinese-speaking aide was assigned to Mrs. Fielding's class, a friend of the mother of Matt Chang. Though a permanent part-time employee, she was not as actively involved as Sandra Baxter was in Mr. Hinton's class, and Zou didn't get to see much of her or get to know her.

At the beginning of the study, the layout of Mrs. Fielding's class was traditional, rather like that in Mr. Hinton's. Later on in the year, she adopted more small-group work, at the same time that Mrs. Garcia was changing from group work to a lecture format. Mrs. Fielding's room was more barren than the other two teachers', which were crowded with pictures, books, and office supplies. There were two East Asian-style landscape paintings hung under the stars-and- stripes in the room, perhaps reflecting her Oriental travels or at least international cultural tastes. By the second semester, however, there were more clippings and decorations on her walls, including Chinese papercuts and characters related to Chinese New Year, such as "Spring" and "Good Fortune" on red paper. The fact that Mrs. Fielding posted them upside down, according to a folk superstition (the upside down position was supposed to stand for the luck returning to the household), meant that she was able to get advice from a Chinese person, either a student or a parent. (She said she studied Mandarin once, but she could not say the sounds with the right tone.)

Mrs. Fielding was soft-spoken, on the whole less demanding of her students. Her classroom was characterized by quiet, partly because of her own demeanor and voice, maybe also partly because the students were mainly Asian and East European. (The Hispanic students were more boisterous; while some of them were "stuck" in Mr. Hinton's class, others placed into Mrs. Garcia's class and caused considerable mischief there.) Also, her classroom was often kept dark because of her frequent use of CNN as teaching material. With low lighting, she couldn't use the blackboard, so she would use an overhead projector instead.

An agreeable, non-authoritarian person, Mrs. Fielding had a presence that was not commanding. Her approach to discipline was very loose. Participation was typically voluntary. Students were not called upon by name, as in Mr. Hinton's classroom, so they could tune out any time. The only times the entire class was called to attention were when she was lecturing and doing group drills. Nevertheless, she had her own way of maintaining control quietly. A Filipino boy, a "class clown," who was once thrown out of Mrs. Garcia's class was so reasonably behaved in her class that he appeared to be a different person.

As a former ESL Lab teacher, Mrs. Fielding did grammar drills of the type used in Mr. Hinton's classroom, in a dry way unvaried by games, usually during the first period. However, during the rest of the Sheltered Core class, she would do a lot of TV-watching around which she built teaching units; she also had other activities like guest lectures, TV viewing, and oral presentations. A feature of Mrs. Fielding's class unobserved elsewhere was to have successful immigrants in the Bay Area come in to talk about various topics. One guest speaker was a Chinese professor. Another was the father of a Russian boy in her class, who spoke at length about his career and his entrepreneurial experiences, as well as his own experience in learning English from the radio and English-teaching tapes. When students asked questions of the guest speaker, Mrs. Fielding corrected their grammar and rephrased their questions.

In addition, Mrs. Fielding often kept the TV monitor tuned to CNN. In fact, her classroom was always kept a little dark, which might have contributed to the quiet atmosphere. She frequently used the newscasts and even the commercials as teaching material. For example, during a class in November 1992, she showed a

CNN clip containing a miscellany of information: President Clinton's defense policy and tax reform; the Republicans' preparations for the 1996 election; democratization in Kenya; and a little segment on the culture and commerce around the tortilla. She then conducted a discussion on the last two items, eliciting oral responses from the students based on information given in the news clip; adding her own observations (such as the history of political parties in the U.S., and the possibility of Perot forming a third party); and explaining vocabulary that the students did not seem too clear on (such as explaining *corruption* with the example of a policeman who lets a speeding driver go when the latter gives him money). Another time the CNN clip concerned North Korea's withdrawal from the nuclear treaty and Warren Christopher's visit to the border between North and South Korea. She elaborated on the conditions of the border, bringing in memories of her own visit there, and arousing quite a bit of interest from the Korean students in the class.

At the beginning of the year, the use of the TV was liked by the students. (When the students got too excited, Mrs. Fielding had to keep them in check.) When asked oral questions about the news, the students' responses were often tentative, and sometimes their guesses were rather haphazard. But they did get interested in the content and Mrs. Fielding did make conscious use of the TV programs, using them as springboards into vocabulary teaching as well as related topics that generally improved the students' acculturation into American society. Also, the students were encouraged to take notes during the news segments, and were assigned journal writing at home and expected to incorporate some of what they learned on TV. Thus TV viewing was part of a larger literacy exercise.

However, when TV viewing was done over and over, it gradually became boring. At times the TV seemed to be used as a babysitting device, as Mrs. Fielding did her own work at the desk without noticing the disengagement of the students: some did homework for other classes, while others read comics.

As for oral presentations, Mrs. Fielding emphasized technical mastery and protocol: loud, clear voice for the speaker; attentiveness and polite applause for the audience. Attention was paid to the *how* of public speaking, not the *what*; feedback did not concern the meaning or content of the presentations, or their organization or argumentation. Zou noted in his field notes that after the instructor had administered the prescribed "polishing," all the speeches sounded similar and were boring to the audience. A variation on the oral presentations was debates based on the news or on readings, but these were also very subdued affairs. After working in groups, a leader from each group would come before the class to read a written argument.

Silent reading was a regular part of Mrs. Fielding's class. Unlike in Mr. Hinton's class, where students were expected to demonstrate what they learned immediately and publicly, students were left to read on their own; sometimes they flipped through the book to get answers.

Mrs. Fielding's Teaching of Writing

Only a few segments involving writing instruction were observed in Mrs. Fielding's class; these are described and discussed as follows. Fortunately, because

Mrs. Fielding asked Audrey So to yield a portfolio of her work, the researchers were able to reconstruct the range of writing done in her class.

(1) Reading Response Starters for Summary Writing

This unit prepared students for a summary assignment that they were to do on a recently completed reading assignment. Using the term *Reading Response Starters* (which was also used by Mrs. Garcia in her class), Mrs. Fielding asked students to come up with sentences that would convey the following responses: appreciation; confusion; connection; and observation. On the projector screen, she wrote down their suggestions until there was a useful list. Then she asked students to orally make sentences using these expressions. (Zou did not observe in-class writing beyond copying the list into notebooks.)

1. Appreciation:
   I liked . . .
   Wasn't it neat that . . .

2. Confusion:
   I don't understand . . .
   I don't get the . . .

3. Connection:
   This reminds me of . . .
   My Dad always does that too.

4. Observation:
   I noticed that every chapter begins with a quote.
   This author does like to describe thing.

(2) Unit on the Election

In this unit in mid-November 1992, students were divided into two groups to hold mock campaigns for a mock election, based on what they learned about the real presidential election two weeks before. The students called their parties the King's Party and the American National Party; each party nominated its own presidential and vice-presidential candidate, and had a chair organizing the campaign. Students walked around discussing strategy with fellow party members. The assignments were twofold: to make a video commercial (the students had access to a video camera), and to draw up a poster for the candidates. The latter was the only writing task associated with this exercise.

(3) Unit on Geography

Students were divided into groups. They were to read a handful of charts and graphs about the climate in the U.S., e.g. precipitation charts; discuss them with fellow group members; then prepare a written report. Then the report was to be delivered orally.

(4) Unit on Grading Criteria

This took place after a boring segment involving a CNN report on volcanoes and a failed attempt to get students interested in an oral discussion of the documentary. Mrs. Fielding then switched gears and began talking about the grading criteria that she had taught in a previous class, painstakingly eliciting the content of her rules from the students. She would ask students to recall the meaning of each term, asking for rephrasing until she found the definition acceptable, then put it on the projector screen for the class to copy. As copied by Zou, the rules were:

1. correctness, which means one should check his or her grammar before turning in his assignment;
2. completeness, which means answers should be complete and include all related information;
3. neatness, which means one should write clearly;
4. comprehension, which means one should understand what is going on in the reading.

Many students simply tuned out the reiteration of rules and were relieved to be interrupted by a fire drill. After the fire drill, Mrs. Fielding continued to lecture, this time explaining what it meant to learn a language, which consisted of the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Clearly, this was teaching *about* English rather than teaching English. Again, the students were bored. Analyzing the components of language acquisition was as helpful to actual language acquisition as trying to teach someone how to ride a bicycle by giving a lecture on bicycle-riding.

Next, Mrs. Fielding had students read their essays aloud in front of the class; the listeners were to write down evaluative responses by using the patterns for appreciation, confusion, connection, and observation mentioned above. Mrs. Fielding wrote out these patterns on the projector screen again to help students remember them.

Finally, she split up the class into pairs. Each person was supposed to choose his/her own partner, then swap essays to read. This was apparently meant to be a peer-editing assignment, but it was cut short by the bell.

(5) Unit on Computer Use

This was the most sustained unit on computer use for writing by any teacher observed during the study. Mrs. Fielding first gave a long, boring lecture on Hypercard—Zou noted that she treated the class like a bunch of two-year-olds—along the lines of "What is Hypercard? It is a visual information center. But what does it mean by visual? It means something that can be seen." Only a few students diligently copied the definitions she read aloud (Audrey So was among them); the rest tuned her out, looking absent-minded. As with her lecture on grading criteria, she seemed to have overlooked the fact that skills, as opposed to content, have to be learned by doing, not through passive listening and conceptual understanding alone. After 20 minutes or so, she explained the mechanics of using Hypercard, introducing the terms *cards*, *stacks*, and *links* and the relationships between them.

At long last, Mrs. Fielding had a Taiwanese student, Jay, come up to demonstrate the actual use of Hypercard, which woke up the students. The other boys who knew

how to do it were envious; the girls stood on tiptoes to look. In general, the class was very engaged and enthusiastic. Then Mrs. Fielding let the students work at the terminals on a report on Black history, which they were learning. She explained to Zou that the computer session was not merely to teach computer use, but to integrate it with content (Black history) and writing. At the end of the unit, she had some students show their cards, on which they did writing and drawings about Black history; some were very well done.

Generalizations about Mrs. Fielding's Teaching of Writing

While the number of classes involving writing instruction that were actually observed by Zou was limited, it was possible to reconstruct other types of writing done in Mrs. Fielding's class through the portfolio turned over (however reluctantly) by Audrey So. Combined with the information gathered from observations, one might list the types of writing done as follows:

Copying (e.g., copying Reading Response Starters form the projector screen; for homework, copying a definition from the glossary next to a given word, or copying a question from a worksheet before writing the answer)
Fill-in-the-blanks (e.g., answering a question on geography)
Matching lists (e.g., matching a list of vocabulary words with definitions on a worksheet on history)
Dictation
Correction and recopying (of dictation)
Note-taking (e.g., from CNN segments)
Reading responses
Summary-writing
Statement of objectives and self-evaluation
Journals (on a variety of topics; read by teacher but not corrected or graded)*
Essays
Poster-making
Translating visual information into writing (e.g., writing a report on U.S. climate based on charts and maps)
Using Hypercard
Peer editing

Compared to Mr. Hinton's ELD class, Mrs. Fielding's Sheltered Core class:

gave more writing tasks
used authentic (i.e., unsimplified, unabridged) material from both TV and readings as a basis for writing
gave opportunities to integrate writing and visuals
moved away from an emphasis on structural correctness to an

* Audrey's folder contained only pre-selected samples of the journals, but judging from the consecutive dates on a set of them, the students were probably required to write something every day. Whether this was kept up throughout the entire year was unclear.

emphasis on meaning and expressiveness
tried to take students through the writing process from pre-writing (reading responses) to post-writing (self-evaluation, peer-editing)

These features were seen in Mrs. Garcia's class as well and appeared to form the basis for a conceptual difference between the ELD and the Sheltered Core level at Cooperville Junior High.

THE SECOND YEAR (CONTINUED)

"SHELTERED CORE": MRS. GARCIA'S CLASS

Mrs. Garcia's Background and Approach to Teaching ESL

Because the relationship between Mrs. Garcia and Zou was strained most of the time, and because the latter presented himself as "Professor Wong's research assistant," he could not find out much more about her background besides her holding a teaching credential in teaching ESL. In terms of status within Cooperville Junior High, Mrs. Garcia seemed to have the reputation as a veteran ESL teacher and be more respected than Mrs. Fielding.

Mrs. Garcia's class was set up very differently from Mr. Hinton's. Instead of an "open-door policy," Mrs. Garcia always closed the door of her classroom. Also, whereas aides could wander around freely in Mr. Hinton's room, giving individual instruction to the students, Mrs. Garcia didn't use an aide. Given her seniority and class size, she must have been entitled to one, but for some reason—maybe wanting to keep better control—she did not have one.

In terms of classroom layout, instead of having a traditional format with rows of seats facing the teacher as in Mr. Hinton's or Mrs. Fielding's classrooms, Mrs. Garcia divided students into seven or eight groups of four, each balanced as much as possible in terms of the students' physical size and gender, and mixing ethnicities. Finally, soft background music was always playing in her room. While this appeared to be a feature borrowed from Suggestopedia, no other feature from the Suggestopedia method was observed.

Despite a non-traditional classroom setup, Mrs. Garcia's control of the students seemed tighter than Mrs. Hinton's in several ways. She had a little bell with which, over the first two weeks of the Fall semester, she had conditioned the students to quiet down whenever she needed the attention of the whole class. It worked well: even the most boisterous discussion was immediately cut short when she rang the bell, and she didn't have to shout. Secondly, Mrs. Garcia could call roll from memory, which gave the students a sense that she was able to monitor them individually. Thirdly, she seemed effective in striking a balance between noise and quiet, expression and suppression, so that the students never felt restrained so long as to resort to major "acting out." For example, in one class, she gave a written quiz. Upon the announcement, many students walked across the room to sharpen their pencils. Then the class was quiet as the quiz was in progress. After the quiz, energy was let off with the chance to do an oral presentation.

As was probably natural with adolescent students, the students were far from perfectly behaved at all times. From Zou's seat at the back of the classroom, he could see cheating on the quiz, but for some reason Mrs. Garcia didn't seem to notice. At times, when she spoke, some Mexican-American students imitated her, and they sometimes and a Filipino boy played the class clown to provoke laughter. Mrs. Garcia didn't suppress them frontally, but with a few words and gestures, she could restore control. Her presence was calm and non-confrontational but apparently powerful. One time, she did have to throw a couple of disruptive students out of the room.

Non-English Languages in Mrs. Garcia's Classroom

Mrs. Garcia was known to understand Spanish and to speak a smattering of it, but Zou had not observed her using Spanish in the classroom. When she had trouble with some of the Hispanic students, she would send them out of the room, instead of switching to Spanish to talk to them.

As a rule, the students' native languages were not suppressed in Mrs. Garcia's classroom; in fact, Zou heard more of the native languages used in her room than in Mr. Hinton's. However, because of the mixed-ethnicity small groups, English was obviously the "official language" and students had to use English to work with fellow members. The native languages were still used across groups. As far as Zou could determine, English was used when Mrs. Garcia was addressing the students; when students of different ethnicities tried to solicit help from each other; when they tried to resolve conflicts without resorting to the instructor; when they tried to express strong feelings like surprise or displeasure; when same-language students were conversing in their native language but needed a certain handy English expression; and when some mischievous students made jokes that they wanted the whole class to understand. The native language was used when same-language students exchanged information while working on an assignment; when they conversed about extracurricular activities, such as family events and night school attendance; when they exchanged friendly or hostile remarks; and when they made private comments on the instructor and students from another ethnicity. As the focal students progressed in the second year, Zou heard more and more English expressions incorporated into Chinese when they were using Chinese among themselves.

Mrs. Garcia separation of language groups sometimes broke down. For example, when the class went to the library to work on computers, students broke into groups of two or three sharing the same computer, on the basis of common ethnicity, language, and gender, and ended up using their native languages much more than in the regular classroom. Mrs. Garcia's role was reduced to policing: hushing the girls, telling the boys to sit down.

Class size diminished gradually throughout the year, until, by March 1993, only 17 students were left, 12 girls and 5 boys. The old system of small groups of four was no longer as feasible, so Mrs. Garcia usually lectured to the whole class, instituting group work again when there was a reading or drawing assignment. Whenever the group format was used, the girls split into three groups—Vietnamese-speaking; Mandarin-speaking; and Korean- and Japanese-speaking—whereas the five boys

(three Chinese; one Japanese; one Vietnamese) always stuck to each other despite different native languages. Mrs. Garcia tried to break down the gender barrier, but to no avail.

The Teaching of Writing in Mrs. Garcia's Classroom

The number of Mrs. Garcia's Sheltered Core classes that could be observed by Zou was limited. However, her teaching of writing had distinct characteristics, and could further be divided into two distinct periods separated by the spring break in early 1992, during which time she received training in a series of seminars offered by the school district, aimed at developing English proficiency "through using texts that make students talk a lot." While this information about her special training was announced to the whole class, Zou felt it was for his benefit. Earlier, in November 1992, when Zou asked her about how much writing the students did, Mrs. Garcia had seemed displeased. Starting February 1993, after taking the seminars, she took a distinctly meaning-centered approach that emphasized pre-writing responses and more writing.

The following account will first describe one of Mrs. Garcia's favorite activities throughout the year, "Show Not Tell," then describe her writing instruction during the pre- and post-seminar periods, each account followed by analysis and a set of generalizations.

"Show Not Tell"

A typical "Show Not Tell" unit involved:

(1) a reading session when students would either read a prescribed text, like *Dragonwings*, or pick something, such as a magazine or a storybook in the classroom. Sometimes the activity assumed the reading to have been done at home.

(2) small-group work on some kind of product incorporating visuals, such as a postcard, picture booklet, collage, poster, etc., based on a common topic.

(3) reconvening of the entire class to discuss the products and do language exercises, such as synonyms, oral presentations, etc.

These were done a lot in Mrs. Garcia's class. Apart from reflecting her beliefs in the nature of writing and writing instruction, there were also good practical reasons for doing "Show and Tell." It reduced the amount of teaching done by the teacher, varied the pacing and released pent-up energy, and created more student engagement. Toward the end of the year, when the students were all restless from the approaching semester-end and the imminent move to Hill School, "Show Not Tell" was the only collective activity that could keep the class from falling apart.

Pre-seminar period

Examples of Mrs. Garcia's teaching of writing during the Fall semester include the following:

(1) Unit on Indian culture:

This unit integrated reading, speaking, listening, and writing, as well as incorporated grammar exercise. Based on a previous reading about the culture and

living conditions of Indian tribes, Mrs. Garcia asked each group of four to get up in front of the class and make an oral presentation. She wrote on the blackboard:

1. stand erect
2. speak clearly
3. speak loudly
4. look at audience
5. smile.

The students were asked to copy these phrases and mark them according to each presenter's performance. Apparently oral presentations were assigned quite frequently and these rules were important to Mrs. Garcia, as Zou observed her emphasizing them in another session.

Each presenter read from prepared notes, occasionally referring to a map hanging on the wall. When the presentation was over, Mrs. Garcia asked students to give their impressions of the performance. Those who had something to say had to phrase it in the past tense, such as "A spoke loudly."

Then Mrs. Garcia built a writing exercise around the performance, starting with the general statement, "Group One gave a report about Indians," followed by "A stood erect," "B spoke clearly," "C spoke loudly," etc. She emphasized that each presenter should be mentioned at least once. The evaluation was written out as a paragraph. There was no particular effort to encompass situations where the performance did not fit into any of the categories.

When some students asked if it was OK to use different words, such as "D looked at the students" instead of "D looked at the audience," Mrs. Garcia commended the suggestion very highly and told students they could use their own words.

In another class, students were asked to take turns reading aloud from a book about Indians; at the end, the class applauded. As usual, protocol was stressed.

(2) Unit on European explorers:

Another class observed showed another integrated unit in which students had to use reading and writing skills in group work. The reading was about European explorers and their voyages. Mrs. Garcia drew a large chart on the blackboard with the following categories: name, nationality, sponsoring country, expeditions, dates, areas explored, result. She provided the names and students had to fill in the corresponding blanks by consulting the book. The exercise was done in a slow, leisurely way. Students took turns coming up to the blackboard to fill in the blanks; they made frequent mistakes and Mrs. Garcia either corrected them or sent them back to the book to get answers.

In the second half of the class, each group of students was to make their own chart on a large sheet of paper. Basically they copied the completed information from the chart on the blackboard. With a lot of crayons, rulers, and giggles, the students worked together. No effort was made to ensure that everyone practiced some writing; one student could be just doing the drawing of lines, another did the copying. Matt Chang was heard busy talking in Chinese; he was not stopped by Mrs. Garcia.

(3) Unit on *Dragonwings*:

In November 1992, the class read Chinese American writer Laurence Yep's *Dragonwings* over several weeks. Yep's novel, a very popular reading in schools, is based on the real story of an early Chinese immigrant who made an airplane. On the day of Zou's visit, Mrs. Garcia was very friendly and showed him a book that she used as visual aid for *Dragonwings*, the famous *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (New York: Dover, 1984); as well as supplementary background information on Laurence Yep that she had gathered.

The first homework assignment on *Dragonwings*, examples of which Mrs. Garcia showed to Zou while the students were doing silent reading, was to show the protagonist Moon Shadow's initial impressions of America and Chinatown, either through writing or through drawing. Zou was able to copy the booklets made by Matt Chang and John Sun for this assignment.

For this class, Mrs. Garcia again drew a big chart on the blackboard with seven slots:

Hand Clap
White Deer
Lefty
Black Dog
Company of the Peach Orchard Vow
Uncle Bright Star
Windrider

These were names of characters (except for the "Company," a laundry). Each group was assigned one slot; students read pages 21-30 to find relevant information. After the break, each group sent people to the blackboard to fill in the information, such as

Hand Clap exaggerates.
Lefty gambles.
Black Dog takes drugs.

Afterwards, Mrs. Garcia discussed each character; students would call out additional information about him and the teacher would organize the suggested words and phrases into a body of knowledge about that character. She did not always make an effort to keep the structures of the phrases consistent. For example, for White Deer, she would write:

He is a Buddhist.
He is like a mother.
He cooks for the family.
Advice.

Sometimes she asked questions about why a character was named in such-and-such a way.

Afterwards, the class did more exercises on image-word relationships. Their homework was to draw pictures for the new vocabulary learned from the book and in class. They had a choice between writing a definition or drawing a picture to illustrate its meaning, but no copying from a dictionary was allowed.

Generalizations about Mrs. Garcia's teaching in the pre-seminar period:

Types of writing observed in Mrs. Garcia's class during this period include:

Copying
Fill-in-the-blanks
Complete-the-sentence
Matching lists
Substitution exercises
Responses to classroom activities
Responses to current events
Pre-writing group work
Responses to readings (writing or drawing)

While this list may not look very different from Mrs. Fielding's, Mrs. Garcia was actually operating from a more definite "teaching philosophy" that could be profitably compared with Mr. Hinton's.

As in Mr. Hinton's class, the four skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—were closely integrated in Mrs. Garcia's class. Some types of exercises were similar to the ones students did in 7th grade ESL, while others were new to them. Though she did not articulate any theories to Zou about ESL teaching and learning, what she did in class reflected a number of assumptions philosophically very different from Mr. Hinton's audiolingual, stimulus-response framework.

In terms of similarities with Mr. Hinton's approach, Mrs. Garcia assigned copying: both the feedback on oral presentations and the charts involved copying, some at a level comparable to Mr. Hinton's (the list of "rules" about public speaking), others requiring control of longer, more complicated stretches of language (the chart on the European explorers). A test given by Mrs. Garcia involving rote memorization, not mentioned in the units above, was for students to match states and their capitals, which was something Mr. Hinton would be very comfortable with. In both classrooms, writing was seldom spontaneous—Zou didn't witness any assignment of spontaneous or unrestricted writing given by Mrs. Garcia. Instead, the writing was guided and controlled, though less rigidly than in 7th grade; students did not generate their own topics or write about their lives directly. Even when they were supposedly responding to the presentations, the sentences produced took the form of "objective" descriptions and did not take the students' subjective reactions—positive or negative feelings, free associations—into account. While this disregard of the listeners'/writers' subjectivity could be partially explained by a desire to avoid hurting the presenters' feelings, Mrs. Garcia's focus might suggest to the students that writing was supposed to be impersonal and "external." Indeed, some of the writing, such as the feedback on the speakers, was in fact grammar practice in the "substitution drill" mode. The repeated use of charts had structuralist

overtones. Like Mr. Hinton, Mrs. Garcia stressed the importance of mechanical correctness through the phrase: "Cross your t's and dot your i's." Her repetition of the "rules" about public speaking was somewhat comparable to Mr. Hinton's emphasis on uniformity and predictability in his lessons.

On the other hand, a number of differences from Mr. Hinton's teaching, especially his teaching of writing, were striking. Chief among these was the importance of contextualization for Mrs. Garcia.

For example, even when Mrs. Garcia assigned reading aloud from a book, which was a rather passive and mechanical exercise, she framed it as a performance in a social setting. The performance was not just for the teacher to hear and judge, with fellow students as incidental eavesdroppers, but called for an active response (applause) from the rest of the class afterwards.

Secondly, while some of the lists on the blackboard resembled those in Mr. Hinton's class, they came from larger and more sustained contexts than those used in the latter. If Mr. Hinton typically grouped words and phrases by *nominal categories* (weights and measures; symptoms and injuries; fruits and vegetables; etc.), Mrs. Garcia's lists and charts presented as part of a *narrative* (about Indian cultures; European explorations; the *Dragonwings* story). Thus while students might still produce writing in isolated, topically organized clusters, there was always an implicit narrative framing them. After a complete-the-sentence exercise on *Dragonwings*, Mrs. Garcia continued to dwell on the characters and events in the story, using the sentences on the blackboard as a point of departure for elaborations. This contrasted with Mr. Hinton's approach, in which writing exercises were often the culmination of reading, listening, or oral work, and which suggested that writing was a kind of fixing or reinforcement of more ephemeral manifestations of language.

Other examples of contextualization can be cited. The response exercise assigned by Mrs. Garcia was a kind of substitution drill, like the kind done in Mr. Hinton's class. However, the sentences were supposed to derive from the immediate situation and made statements that could be checked against "reality," i.e., the actual performances just witnessed. Further, whereas Mr. Hinton taught synonyms as parallel columns of words on the blackboard, Mrs. Garcia presented them in context and also made a special point to encourage students to use their own words.

When Mrs. Garcia forbade copying definitions from the dictionary, her message was that she preferred even a non-verbal representation of the student's understanding of a word (picture) to a mechanical reproduction of a "correct" but prepackaged meaning. This might give the students a greater sense that words should not be detached from their meanings.

Indeed, Mrs. Garcia had a predilection for visual images, with which other components of the instruction were integrated. Besides the illustrations mentioned above, Zou also observed an exercise in which students were to color a U.S. map based on election results from newspapers. With the exception of "decorating circles into clocks" exercise that Zou observed, which seemed to be busy work to avoid Zou's scrutiny of her teaching, Mrs. Garcia consistently contextualized her material.

Finally, in terms of teaching "correctness," Mrs. Garcia typically corrected them on individual papers, or else collected them and strung them in sentences that she

would put on the blackboard for students to correct as a group. She never confronted the culprit to point out his/her mistakes in front of the class, which Mr. Hinton did.

In general, Mrs. Garcia's assumptions about the students' learning of English were less behavioristic and more meaning-oriented. The students were less pressured to perform in stimulus-response situations and did not take part in an explicit, quantified, and material reward system. Most of the material was derived from books but some was from real-life events (election). While Zou could not obtain information about the other readings, *Dragonwings* is an unsimplified, unabridged original work frequently used for native-English speaking students as well. The election material also indicated "adult" subject matter. Mrs. Garcia's teaching of writing allowed more autonomy in the students and accepted an alternative means of expressing understanding (pictures) to supplement any inadequacy in writing skills. However, it did not particularly encourage spontaneity and subjective responses. No explicit teaching of grammar, in the form of structure-based units, was observed by Zou during this period.

Post-seminar period

Immediately after Mrs. Garcia attended training seminars which stressed a process-oriented, student-centered approach, her teaching, especially her teaching of writing, exhibited noticeable changes. Not only did she place even more emphasis than before on contextualization and meaningfulness, even communicativeness, but pre-writing became an important part of classwork, more varied writing tasks were introduced, and more writing was produced. These changes can be seen in the following accounts of several units observed by Zou. At the same time, as discussed in greater detail below, Mrs. Garcia did not adopt the new approach wholesale but appeared to revert to a more passive, word-based approach as the semester wore on.

(1) Unit on story on Chinese American Story

The reading for this lesson was a book about a Chinese American family that the students already read in the Fall semester. (Zou could not get the title from "peeking" for fear of arousing Mrs. Garcia's ire.) Mrs. Garcia read a passage from the book concerning the family's move from a shabby old house into new lodgings. After reading it twice, she called on individual students to tell her a few things about the house. Typical responses were "Door, window, lamp, chair, bathroom," etc. Other students were free to chime in. Upon Mrs. Garcia's approval of the responses, the student proceeded to turn the information into a picture.

The passage was read twice again, and students were asked to write down words and lines that interested them. Mrs. Garcia circulated around the room to check on the answers, making sure that the students obtained the correct information from the reading. Sometimes she asked, "Why did you pick up this line or phrase?" Students became actively involved. Some even gave answers (e.g., "I like this." "It is important.") without being asked. She was non-judgmental; as long as they gave reasons it was OK. Some students made general comments without picking out a particular phrase, but Mrs. Garcia accepted that too.

Mrs. Garcia encouraged the students to compare notes and share information and opinions. She also introduced synonyms to some of the more advanced

students (including Matt Chang) who wondered aloud whether they could say something another way. For example, she presented *go in the door, get in the door,* and *enter* as equally acceptable; or *washroom* as a synonym of *bathroom.* In fact, she made an effort to guide students who were sweating to come up with the exact word to settle for alternative expressions.

This part of the lesson contrasted with Mrs. Garcia's pre-seminar approach in that students were given a chance to voice their subjective reactions, to make choices, and to justify their choices. Thus the tasks might be described as communicative instead of merely meaningful. Features continued from before the training seminars included the use of pictures and the emphasis on alternative expressions, which showed respect for the students' intended meanings rather than for lexical exactness; and the lack of explicit grammar teaching.

Interestingly, the second half of the lesson showed a deterioration of student interest that appeared attributable to an increase in teacher control. After a noisy, active, but productive segment, Mrs. Garcia gave a writing exercise in which students were to complete sentences using a list of "Reading Response Starters" pasted on the blackboard.

Reading Response Starters:

I wonder . . .
I began to think of . . .
I was surprised . . .
This reminds me . . .
I don't believe . . .
I don't understand . . .
It bothers me when . . .

The students were to complete sentences that referred to the reading. While there was no doubt a certain amount of meaningfulness in this exercise as well, since the sentences all had to relate to the story, the choice was now removed from the realm of thinking and feeling to the realm of structure. An active-expansive process was turned into a passive-selective one. In a way, despite the communicative-sounding prompts, the task was merely meaningful. The class began to drag noticeably, losing the spiritedness of the first period. To wrap up the session and wake up the sleepy kids, Mrs. Garcia engaged the class in a discussion of health care reform and President Clinton's performance, which were very much in the news recently. She also showed them a book on First Ladies throughout American history.

The "Reading Response Starters" sounded like an idea learned from the training seminars. If so, it wasn't clear whether Mrs. Garcia learned to use them in the manner described above, as a sophisticated kind of "complete-the-sentence," or whether they were meant to be taught otherwise, as a range of options for the students' use as they saw fit, in communicative situations of their own design.

(2) Unit on Walt Whitman

Mrs. Garcia introduced the class to Walt Whitman's "O Captain, My Captain," the first poem that the class read in English as a group. As with *Dragonwings*, this was "authentic," i.e., unsimplified, material, only by a more famous author, and in a genre that the group had not worked on yet. It was clear from the students' attentiveness that the lesson was a success; the material was refreshing and the teacher pointed out features in the poem that they did not notice on their own. Mrs. Garcia read aloud to draw attention to the sound effects of the poem as well as its manipulation of words. She both appealed to the students' intuition—what they would pick out as "sounding good"—and to their analytic faculty, breaking down the poem into details so that their interrelations be analyzed.

Mrs. Garcia dealt with the unfamiliar words in the poem by explaining them in relation to synonyms. Thus when *hover* came up, she brought up *fly* and *glide*, which appeared in *Dragonwings* in connection with kites and airplanes. This seemed a way to draw upon what the students already knew and show that they had a repertoire, and also to emphasize that words came in families according to meaning.

This way of handling vocabulary teaching was in keeping with an "association drill" Mrs. Garcia gave at the end of the unit. The teacher would designate an object or a situation and the students, as a group, were to come up with as many related ideas as possible. The opening task was a straightforward substitution drill, e.g., replacing *pizza* in *The pizza tastes so good* with other food terms. Next, Mrs. Garcia gave the word *cheese*, and the class responded with a mixture of words, some verbs, some adjectives, some nouns, e.g., *spread out, rubberband, yarn, gum*, etc. For *pepperoni*, the class came up with *salty, crispy*, and *crust*; for *sauce, hot, red*, and *spill*. As responses like *rubberband* and *spill* show, when grammatical form was not prescribed and the students were free to contribute whatever words they knew, the result could be quite refreshing and gratifying.

Mrs. Garcia introduced several rather abstract concepts of literary analysis—*symbol, metaphor, theme, climax*—by the "show not tell" technique idea again. She gave each group of students crayons to translate these ideas into pictures, then explain them to the class. Despite the challenging nature of such a task, the students were engaged. Not everyone did well, but on the whole the class was quite imaginative in creating images, sometimes farfetched ones, to explain their understanding of the terms. This literary analysis was observed by Zou three or four times with other stories.

In connection with the Walt Whitman unit, one should mention another class in which "authentic" material was used. At the end of March 1993, Mrs. Garcia introduced students to a story called "He Lion, Bruh Bear and Bruh Rabbit," based on African-American folklore about Br'er Rabbit. She first played an audiotape of the story narrated by a male voice in Black English, then directed the students' attention to two literary concepts: the narrative point of view (she asked students to retell parts of the story from alternative points of view), and the genre of tall tales. At first the students were perplexed by the unfamiliar pronunciation of the storyteller, but soon some of the girls picked up some lines and reproduced the pronunciation of Br'er Rabbit, whereupon everybody got into an animated

discussion of the story, trying to recollect the lines spoken by each animal and the way they were said.

Even though no writing was done based on the Br'er Rabbit story, the students' positive responses to it as well as to Walt Whitman's poem suggested that, at least at this level, and assuming appropriate choices, ESL students did not feel intimidated by the lack of special accommodating features in "authentic" material. Quite the opposite: they seemed stimulated and challenged.

(3) Unit on Collages

In late May 1993, Zou observed a class in which students were to come up with a "concept" around which cut-out pictures from old magazines could be organized into a collage. Two things were interesting about this unit: Mrs. Garcia's explanation as to why she assigned this work; and the students' reactions.

Mrs. Garcia gave the students boxes of old magazines and asked each one to think of a "concept" or "theme"—not just obvious ones like "animals" or "sports" or too-broad ones like "food," but more individualized ones. Each student would rummage in the magazines boxes, cut out pictures related to the chosen concept and paste them onto a used folder to make a collage. Afterwards, class was reconvened and students presented their collages. She spent her time circulating around the room, explaining the procedure to one, urging another to change her topics, in general policing the class, which was quite noisy and unruly. John Sun acted up very badly, causing Mrs. Garcia to call him to her desk and conduct a private lesson. The example set by John Sun caused other boys in the room to misbehave as well.

Mrs. Garcia explained to Zou that the collage exercise, even though involving no writing, was related to the development of writing skills. It was supposed to help students see connections between things so that, in actual writing, they would be able to develop a sense of focus and organization in presenting their ideas. This showed a belief on Mrs. Garcia's part that thematic organization was a general cognitive skill that could be transferred from non-verbal or pictorial tasks to writing tasks.

The students, however, did not seem to take the exercise seriously. To begin with, the impending summer vacation and move to Hill School created an atmosphere of excited anticipation in which very little substantive teaching could take place. Moreover, it was possible that at least some of the students felt it was a childish exercise. Overall, the classroom was restless.

(4) Self Evaluation Sheet

Mrs. Garcia used a Self Evaluation Sheet in which the writer was supposed to comment on his/her own assessment of a piece of writing. Zou obtained a copy of this in April 1993, as part of one of John Sun's essay assignments. It was not clear at what point she started using it, but the form did appear to be a fairly regular feature of her assignments. The use of the Self Evaluation Sheet suggested that Mrs. Garcia consciously taught post-writing as an integral component of the entire writing process, and expected her Sheltered Core students to be reflective, to develop a "feel" for good writing, and to justify their opinions.

The Self Evaluation Sheet was made up of the following questions, with spaces in between for student answers.

1. Describe in a sentence or two what the assignment required.

2. What did you think was the strongest part of your essay/project? Explain why and give specific examples from your work.

3. What did you think was the weakest part of your essay/project? Explain why and give specific examples from your work.

4. Using the appropriate rubric (scale of 6 to 1), give your self [sic] a score and justify it with specific traits from the rubric.

Most likely, the six-level rubric was the one based on CLAS that the school district switched to in the second year of the study.

While the self-evaluation questions are detailed, in practice students might not adhere to the requirements fully. John Sun's responses to the questions were brief and did not include examples, but no effort to extract a more thoughtful self-evaluation was evident.

The above four items showed Mrs. Garcia operating with a student-centered process approach emphasizing conceptual understanding and discourse-level work and downplaying formal accuracy. However, before one concludes that she was a complete convert, it should be noted that a teacher-centered, word-based approach coexisted with her experiments, and sometimes they worked at cross-purposes with each other. For example, concurrent with the contextualized teaching of vocabulary, she encouraged students to use the thesaurus provided at the end of each of their workbook, and to consult a dictionary or ask the teacher if the meaning of a thesaurus entry was unclear.

One time she seated the five boys in the middle of the classroom, surrounded by the 12 girls, and asked the former to come up with synonyms for a given word, e.g., *jump* should be linked to *leap, spring,* and *bounce*. The students simply did not have that kind of vocabulary and looked sheepish, but Mrs. Garcia reassured them that using the Thesaurus would allow them to learn "more interesting words" than they already knew. Zou noted wryly in his field notes, "I fancy if they want to say something interesting, at this stage they would say it in their native language." Another time, she took out the thesaurus and tried to give the class a quiz on synonyms, e.g., she asked for other ways to say *fly*, and someone suggested *glide*. However, she could not get very far with the students; in fact, she had to reach for the book herself after a pause. Turning to the right page, she read out: *hover, soar, sail, dart,* and so forth.

Besides the issue of vocabulary development, the role of explicit teaching about "correctness" (grammatical and mechanical) was also a central—and difficult-to-answer—question for ESL writing instruction at this level. While the use of "undoctored," uncondescending teaching material was seen to have a positive effect on student interest and involvement, the students' command of English was still so

shaky that the ability to "pick up" rules of correctness while doing process writing could not simply be assumed. The following accounts of Mrs. Garcia's explicit teaching of "correctness" might shed some light on the question.

During the period following the Br'er Rabbit unit, Mrs. Garcia told students about the impending move of the ESL program to Hill School, sang old folksongs with the students for half an hour, then went over their assignments based on a textbook called *Great American Stories*, in which exercises testing the reader's command of vocabulary, idioms, reading comprehension, and grammar are appended (see account below).

The types of exercises corrected included: Time of events, including year and date; answering questions in complete sentences; converting active to passive voice and dropping the "logical subject"; converting declarative sentences into questions; paraphrasing with idiomatic expressions. Very few students did well on items 2 and 5; most had problems with the third person singular and the verb inversion in interrogative sentences. This was one of the few instances of explicit grammar teaching witnessed by Zou.

Another related, but more ambitious, lesson explicitly taught editing skills at both the discourse level and sentence and word levels. Mrs. Garcia gave a series of editing criteria for students to learn: she emphasized the importance of having an introduction, middle and conclusion, as well as grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. She explained each criterion by using simpler words, e.g., "What is a 'wide range of vocabulary'? It means a lot of expressions." What does 'coherence' mean? It means ideas have to be expressed clearly. What does 'mechanics' mean? It is about spelling, paragraphing, etc." After the explanations, Mrs. Garcia did peer-editing by asking students to evaluate each other's essay, giving it a score of between one and six according to the criteria.

At this point—early April, 1993—there was obviously more writing done by the ESL students, but not everybody enjoyed it and there was some acting out. Many failed to bring their assignment to class. The classroom atmosphere was chaotic, morale was low, and John Sun, who by this time had become sullen and obnoxious, shouted out "Seven!" when he was asked to give a score between one and six to his piece.

A third example of explicit teaching for "correctness" concerned sentence-correction. In late April of 1993, Mrs. Garcia gave a series of sentences containing errors for students to correct, for example, "My Uncle learned me to choose between many apples to find the better ones." Mrs. Garcia drew the students' attention to the rules of capitalization, agreement, punctuation, as well as discussed word choice. This lesson did not last very long, and soon Mrs. Garcia returned to "show not tell" exercises that were a staple in her class.

Generalizations about Mrs. Garcia's teaching in the post-seminar period:

Types of writing observed during this period include:

Complete-the-sentence (meaningful)
Answering written questions in complete sentences
Structural transformation exercises

Responses to readings (picture or writing)
Essay writing (This was never observed directly in class, but Zou observed students bringing in essays for classwork and was able to collect essays from Matt Chang and John Sun.)
Sentence correction
Self-evaluation
Peer-editing

Vocabulary development, which was not necessarily written, included word association group exercises and thesaurus-based word substitution exercises.

It was clear that, after taking the school district-sponsored seminars on writing instruction during the break, Mrs. Garcia returned to the spring semester with renewed enthusiasm and a greater emphasis on writing. She expected greater output from the students. More importantly, as the above list of observed writing tasks indicates, she inculcated a sense of writing as a process including pre-writing, writing, and post-writing. She augmented the contextualization already exhibited before by introducing the element of communicativeness (as opposed to meaningfulness) in her writing tasks; by attending to the students' subjective responses; by stressing "global" cognitive development (to the point of being willing to accept pictorial equivalents of written words); and by using "authentic" material. In introducing concepts of literary analysis (e.g., prosody, metaphor and symbol, narrative point of view, genre), Mrs. Garcia conformed to expectations for native-speaker students at this level and had not "dumbed down" the material for ESL learners.

Mrs. Garcia introduced the essay form as well as the concept and practice of editing for both discursive coherence and mechanical correctness. The criteria of good writing that she used for the peer editing exercise were not substantially different from what a writing instructor of native speakers would use. However, she appeared to consciously supplement these general criteria by devoting at least some class time to explicit grammar teaching and correction.

At the same time that Mrs. Garcia employed a more student-centered and discourse-oriented process approach, she continued to assign exercises that drew attention to the sentence and word level.

Finally, it should be mentioned that because of the difficulties encountered in securing Mrs. Garcia's cooperation, information about writing activities in her class was gained mostly from observation. It is entirely possible that many more types of writing were done by her students than indicated by classroom activities.

THE FOCAL STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND WRITING DEVELOPMENT

The following analysis of the focal students' development in the English language in general and English writing in particular is based on the multi-skills Language Assessments given over the course of two years; any additional writing samples obtained either from the student or from the teacher; and the field notes.

The Assessment were administered to all the focal students in both the Spanish and the Chinese portions of this study.

As mentioned before, in the Chinese segment of this project, poor access was a problem, due to the misgivings of teachers and parents and the reluctance of the focal students. At times, the students had to be coaxed, cajoled, pleaded with. Also, because of the length of each Assessment, which could not always be completed at one sitting, but upon Zou's return trips the student would no longer want to do more, and in order to preserve the ongoing relationship and complete the project, Zou decided not to push the demand but to try to obtain writing samples from them in other settings, or from the teacher. Only three Assessments were given, not four as originally planned; and not all the tasks were completed by all the focal students.

The Language Assessments

For the First Language Assessment, the oral portion consisted of a series of questions about the student's life, asked in the native language, to put the subject at ease. However, if the researcher determined the student was ready to respond to English, he/she could switch to questioning in English, as well as switch back to the native language if the student failed to understand. The student could respond in either language. The reading portion of the Assessment was based on a copy of *News for Kids* magazine, a colorful, graphics-filled magazine using English intended for kids 7-12, with a circulation of 50,000 in U.S. schools as part of the Literacy for Kids Program. Zou showed a section entitled *News Briefs From Around the World* and asked the focal student to read it if he/she could, then tell the researcher about it. The writing portion consisted of asking him/her to "write something in English about your family or school." Because the focal students looked very uncomfortable at this point with the tasks, Zou added to the suggested topics "anything else you want to write about." Also, while the instruction for the researcher asked him to request a half-page piece of writing, Zou decided to modify it by telling the focal students "You may write up to five sentences, more if you want to." He told the students it was OK to use Chinese if he/she couldn't think of the English word for something. Finally, because of the unexpectedly large amount of time and effort the students took to complete these portions of the First Assessment, Zou decided to leave the collection of Chinese to other occasions.

For the Second Language Assessment, the oral/aural portion was the same as in the First. However, to assess the student's ability to comprehend academic English used to convey information, as well as to take notes, the researcher read aloud, at normal "teaching speed" (not specially slowed down), four short paragraphs about Hawaii (totally about 200 words), pointing to a photocopied map. The student was instructed to take notes on a piece of paper, then answer three questions about Hawaii. Reading and writing (composition) tasks were related on this Assessment. Students were given four life-stories about famous people, each about 450 words in length, and asked to choose one to read silently. Afterwards, they were asked to write something about the famous person, referring to the reading if necessary. They were also asked to write something about his/her school or family.

The famous people in the chosen readings are Julio Inglesias, Michael Jackson, Pele, and Barbra Streisand. Zou noted that for Chinese students from both Taiwan

and mainland China, Pele was well-known and Michael Jackson somewhat well-known, but they appeared unfamiliar with Streisand and Inglesias. In contrast, Inglesias might have been well-known to the Spanish-speaking focal students.

As instructed, Zou attempted to do protocol by asking the student to comment in Chinese on his/her writing while doing the writing in English. However, this proved to be too difficult. Instead, at the end of the Assessment, Zou tried to ask each student to talk in Chinese about his/her English writing.

For the Third Language Assessment, the oral/aural portion was again the same as in the preceding ones. The next section was a combined assessment of listening comprehension and reading comprehension of academic English, as measured by a test with yes/no and multiple-choice questions. The focal student was given a one-page reading from a science textbook with illustrations and the test questions, and told to listen to the researcher's explanations as they followed the reading together. Then the student completed the test by orally giving the answers. However, upon the analysis of the test questions, Wong found that the questions on electrons and electricity were not based on the given reading and seemed to refer to another unit not included. Thus a focal student's performance on this part might not be an accurate indicator of his/her proficiency.

The next part of the Assessment consisted of a one-page essay on the American Indian Massasoit, which the researcher was supposed to present in lecture form and the student was supposed to read. Then the student was supposed to write something on the passage, as well as a "free" composition on family or school as before. However, Zou had only limited time to do the Assessment in the library during lunch hour. As the other students came in after an hour and a half, the place became noisy and the subjects restless. The focal students were willing to do the "free" composition, but Zou had to rush the Massasoit portion by modifying it into a straight reading assessment and asking comprehension questions orally afterwards. Thus we are missing samples of writing based on a lecture and reading. By this time, the focal students had become uncooperative and Zou himself quite demoralized. The idea of renewing the request and completing the Massasoit writing assessment upon a subsequent visit was just not feasible.

Rating Scales

To describe the focal students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing, we rely on the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* issued in 1989. These guidelines were not specifically developed for the English language, nor do they address the language demands peculiar to the academic setting. Furthermore—and this is a conclusion that slowly emerged through the analysis of the focal students' writings—on the writing portion of the *ACTFL* guidelines a beginner's problems with morphology and syntax are assumed to occur alongside problems with organization, which is certainly not what happened with the writing of some of the focal students. For example, the *Intermediate-Mid* description reads:

> Able to meet a number of practical writing needs. Can write short, simple letters. Content involves personal preferences, daily routine, everyday events, and other topics grounded in personal experience. Can express present time

> or at least one other time frame or aspect consistently, e.g., nonpast, habitual, imperfective. Evidence of control of the syntax of noncomplex sentences and basic inflectional morphology, such as declensions and conjugation. *Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments on a given topic and provides little evidence of conscious organization.* Can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives. (Italics added)

This description betrays a lumping together of linguistic and cognitive abilities, assuming that someone struggling with the form of a foreign language would also be one who lacks conscious organization. Later in the report, in connection with the writing samples of specific focal students, such issues will be discussed further.

For the moment, regardless of problems with the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*, since they do provide global descriptions of various stages in a foreign language learner's progress, they afford the researchers a convenient way to locate the focal students in a larger context of language development. Thus they will be used in this report, at least as a preliminary step to developing more accurate rating scales geared to Chinese learners of English. Where the rating scale is not named, it is assumed that the *ACTFL* guidelines are used.

To describe the focal subjects' writing development, we additionally refer to the six-level scoring guides provided for three types of writing—narrative, informative, and persuasive—given in Claudia Gentile's *Exploring New Methods for Collecting Students' School-based Writing: NAEP's 1990 Portfolio Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1992), to be referred to as the Gentile scoring guides in this report. A summary of the scoring guides from pp. 20-23 is appended (Figure 1). Since these scoring guides were not developed specifically with non-native speakers of English in mind, much less Chinese immigrant students; since the guides were developed based on the writing samples of 4th and 8th graders; and since not all the writing samples produced could be considered school-based (though all were collected in a school-related context), the use of the guides is not meant to locate the focal students in a "national" scale for the general student population. Rather, the intention is to lift the analyses beyond individual profiles and give the reader a "handle" for understanding their proficiency in writing.

Reproduction of Writing Samples

To reduce cut-and-paste insertion into the main text of this report, photocopies of writing samples have kept at a minimum. In the retyped version of a writing sample, errors are left uncorrected, and significant cross-outs and corrections made by the student are preserved as much as possible.

Figure 1. Gentile scoring guides, pp. 20-23 (on the following four pages).

Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 present the three scoring guides developed. Each guide classifies papers into six main levels. Later in the chapter, samples of students' papers are presented for each of the levels within these guides.

The Narrative Scoring Guide In reading and evaluating the narrative papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key features of narrative writing. First, they loosely defined a story as a series of related events or happenings. Hence, the first level of the narrative scoring guide is not termed a "story," but an *Event Description* because only one event is described.

Figure 2.1: Narrative Scoring Guide

1 **Event Description.** Paper is a list of sentences minimally related or a list of sentences that all describe a single event.

2 **Undeveloped Story.** Paper is a listing of related events. More than one event is described, but with few details about setting, characters, or the events. (Usually there is no more than one sentence telling about each event.)

3 **Basic Story.** Paper describes a series of events, giving details (in at least two or three sentences) about some aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals, or problems to be solved). But the story lacks cohesion because of problems with syntax, sequencing, events missing, or an undeveloped ending.

4 **Extended Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes, including details about most story elements (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, problems to be solved). But the stories are confusing or incomplete (i.e., at the end the characters' goals are ignored or problems inadequately resolved; the beginning does not match the rest of the story; the internal logic or plausibility of characters' actions is not maintained).

5 **Developed Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are clearly developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved) with a simple resolution of these goals or problems at the end. May have one or two problems or include too much detail.

6 **Elaborated Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are well developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved). The resolution of the goals or problems at the end are elaborated. The events are presented and elaborated in a cohesive way.

The second feature the team saw as differentiating among the narrative papers was amount of development. The main difference between the second and third levels of the narrative guide is that, in a *Basic Story*, one aspect of the story is somewhat developed, whereas no aspects of an *Undeveloped Story* are presented in any detail. The difference between the third and fourth levels is that many of the events of an *Extended Story* are somewhat developed at the fourth level. At the fifth level (*Developed Story*) almost all of the events are described in detail.

The third feature of narrative writing the team used to evaluate the papers was quality of development. Papers classified at the upper two levels, *Developed Story* and *Elaborated Story*, not only contained detailed episodes, but also included some source of tension or conflict (characters' goals, problems to be solved, mysteries to be unravelled). These two levels differ in the author's success in establishing and resolving the tension or conflict. While in *Developed Stories* tension is clearly (and often creatively) established, it is not completely resolved; in *Elaborated Stories* the tension is both clearly established and completely resolved.

The Informative Scoring Guide In reading and evaluating the informative papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key traits of informative writing. First, they loosely defined informative writing as the presentation of information and ideas for the purpose of informing an audience. Further, in the process of presenting information, the writer establishes relationships between pieces of information and/or ideas. The papers were then classified according to how well the writers had succeeded in establishing relationships and according to how well they presented the information to a particular audience for a specific purpose.

The differences between levels one through four are the degree to which the writers established relationships between the pieces of information in their papers. The difference between levels five and six is the degree to which the writers conveyed a sense of audience and purpose. This was often accomplished through the use of an overt type of organizational structure.

Figure 2.2: Informative Scoring Guide

1 **Listing.** Paper lists pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic, but does not relate them. A range of information/ideas is presented.

2 **Attempted Discussion.** Paper includes several pieces of information and some range of information. In part of the paper, an attempt is made to relate some of the information (in a sentence or two), but relationships are not clearly established because ideas are incomplete or undeveloped (the amount of explanation and details is limited).

3 **Undeveloped Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and attempts to relate some of the pieces of information. The relationships are somewhat established, but not completely. The ideas are confused, contradictory, out of sequence, illogical, or undeveloped.

4 **Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and, in at least one section, clearly relates the information using rhetorical devices (such as temporal order, classification, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, problem/solution, goals/resolutions, predictions, speculations, suppositions, drawing conclusions, point of view, ranking, exemplification).

5 **Partially Developed Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and establishes more than one kind of relationship using rhetorical devices, such as those listed above. Information and relationships are well developed, with explanations and supporting details. Paragraphs are well formed but the paper lacks an overriding sense of purpose and cohesion.

6 **Developed Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and establishes more than one kind of relationship using rhetorical devices, such as those listed above. Information and relationships are explained and supported. The paper has a coherent sense of purpose and audience, and is free from grammatical problems. An overt organizational structure is used (such as the traditional essay format).

The Persuasive Scoring Guide In reading and evaluating the persuasive papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key features of persuasive discourse: stating an opinion or position, supporting one's opinion with reasons and/or explanation, and attempting to diffuse or refute the opposing position. While developing an argument by clearly stating and supporting an opinion may be considered an effective way of persuading an audience, the team felt that papers which include the recognition and

refutation of an opposing viewpoint to be more complex forms of persuasion. They placed the 58 persuasive papers submitted by students along a continuum of persuasive complexity, ranging from opinion to argumentation to refutation.

Figure 2.3: Persuasive Scoring Guide

1 **Opinion.** Paper is a statement of opinion, but no reasons are given to support the opinion, or the reasons given are inconsistent or unrelated to the opinion.

2 **Extended Opinion.** Paper states opinion and gives reasons to support the opinion, but the reasons are not explained or the explanations given are incoherent.

3 **Partially Developed Argument.** Paper states opinion and gives reasons to support the opinion, plus attempts to develop the opinion with further explanation. However, the explanations are given but not developed or elaborated. May contain a brief reference to the opposite point of view.

4 **Developed Argument.** Paper states opinion, gives reasons to support the opinion, plus explanations, with at least one explanation developed through the use of rhetorical devices (such as sequence of events, cause and effect, comparison/contrast, classification, problem/solution, point of view, drawing conclusions). May contain a brief summary of the opposite point of view.

5 **Partially Developed Refutation.** Paper states opinion, gives reasons to support opinion, explanations, plus attempts to discuss and/or refute the opposite point of view. Contains an adequate summary of the opposite point of view.

6 **Developed Refutation.** Paper states opinion, gives reasons to support opinion, explanations, plus a discussion and/or refutation of opposing point of view. Refutation is clear and explicit — summarizes opposite point of view and discusses why it is limited or incorrect.

Applying the Evaluative Guides

Scoring the Writing After the scoring guides were developed, another group of teachers (16 elementary, secondary, and college teachers) was trained to apply the scoring guidelines to the papers. The training consisted of two stages: explanation and application. On the first day, the informative scoring guide was presented and explained to the readers, along with samples of papers at each level.

John Sun: A Case Study

Of the four focal students, John Sun made the most consistent progress all around and, in his writing development, reached the highest rating in one sample. In other ways, too, because of his colorful personality and complex circumstances, his story would bring out many of the issues affecting other Chinese speakers. His case will be written up in detail in this report, while profiles of development will be given for the others.

As mentioned in the profile on him earlier in this report, John Sun had not studied English in school in Taiwan and tested as having no reading or writing proficiency in English upon his enrollment in the Cooperville Unified School District two weeks after arrival in the U.S. He was given the First Language Assessment on November 26, 1991; the Second, on May 20, 1992; the Third, on February 1, 1993. Additional writing samples were collected in both English and Chinese.

By the Third Assessment, John had become sullen and rebellious to both the Sheltered Core teacher and the researcher. He was very hostile to the request to participate in this Assessment and had to be flattered and coaxed by Zou.

Development of Listening and Speaking

Of the four focal students, John was the one with the most "verbal" style and made the most progress in listening and speaking. His oral/aural rating on the three Assessments moved from *Novice-High* to *Intermediate-Mid* (maybe *Intermediate-High* for speaking) to *Intermediate-High*.

Chinese was used for 24 of the 102 turns on the First Assessment, none of which exceeded three clauses, and 10 of the Chinese turns occurred at the very beginning as Zou tried to put the subject at ease. He lost patience and became uncooperative after two role-play situations, so Zou did not push him to complete the two remaining situations. At the Second Assessment, of the 113 turns recorded, only five were in Chinese, and all of these were by Zou when he described role-play situations. On no occasion did John fail to understand an English question and resort to asking for an explanation in Chinese; nor did he initiate an exchange in Chinese. Only once did he slip in a Chinese phrase, the equivalent of the filler *that is*, but he immediately switched back to English. By the Third Assessment, none of the 100 turns was in Chinese. In fact, about ten questions into the Assessment, John began complaining about how boring it all was. Zou had to skip some of the questions because of John's impatience and the pressure to get to other portions of the Assessment.

In general, during the first year, the further removed John was from formulaic exchanges, the more trouble he had. On the First Assessment, he already knew alternative formulae (*What is your age?* and *How old is she?*) and colloquial expressions like *yeah* and *sure*. When he could not rely on formulae, he resorted to transfer from Chinese. For example, he said *wash head* for *shampoo*, from Chinese *xi tou*, when asked about his morning routine. When asked to role-play telling a doctor about his ailments, he said *I stomach don't feel well. And my head don't feel well too*. The first sentence of this answer showed a topic-comment structure transferred from Chinese, and the misuse of *feel* to refer to the organ rather than the person also shows influence from Chinese.

On the Second Assessment, the problems John had in the First Assessment were mostly cleared up by this time. For example, he now correctly understood *Where were you born?; Where is your school?*; and the words *hobbies* and *movies*. The majority of his answers to formulaic questions are correct. However, transfer features were still noticeable, such as omission of the copula (*I born in Taiwan*) and omission of the subject (*Usually is about five o'clock*).

In comparison to the First Assessment, John's range of language functions had expanded. When asked if he could insult someone in English, he said "Stupid." He could hedge by using expressions like *kind of* and *something*. He could take teasing: when Zou asked, "Do you like girls?" John replied, "Kind of. I like fishes much better." Whereas he was frustrated after two role-play situations, he completed all four this time. Moreover, he exhibited considerable adventurousness, exuberance, and humor in the role-play situations. When asked by the "doctor" about his problems, John replied in error-ridden but expressive, comprehensible, and elaborated English:

> Yesterday, I feel ill and then I have a headache and then I had a pain in the chest and I think I breathe not very well, so I don't know if I got ill or something.

Although John switched between present and past tense verbs almost randomly, and although *I breathe not very well* indicated trouble with forming the negative with an auxiliary verb and/or transfer from Chinese, on the whole this passage revealed someone who was comfortable with invention and role-play in his second language. Even more amusing is the role-play about shopping, where John used his expertise about pets to practice "one-upmanship" on the researcher. He got into the spirit of the game quickly, and he knew how to bargain in English.

> Zou: Can I help you, sir?
> John: Do you have two years old frog?
> Zou: Yeah, we have one. That is the only one left.
> John: What kind of frog do you have?
> Zou: I don't know their names.
> John: Do you have "corny"* frog?
> Zou: Yeah, that's a corny frog.
> John: How much does it cost?
> Zou: It costs $200.
> John: That is too expensive. If the price is $50, I will take it.
> Zou: I will give it to you for $150, how about that?
> John: Er, I will take it.

In terms of his performance on the listening comprehension (to lecturing in English) and note-taking portion, John answered two of the three questions correctly, but stated "four and half day" in answer to the question how long it takes

---

* Spelling based on John's pronunciation.

to fly from California to Hawaii. (According to the passage, the trip is 4-1/2 hours by plane, 4-1/2 days by boat.) When asked why people go to Hawaii, John said:

> Because there has a lot of beautiful beach and they like to join in the sun, or . . .

Again, whenever John had to depart from formulaic exchanges, his uncertain formal command of English forms began to show itself. The use of *there has* instead of *there are*, an extremely common problem among Chinese speakers, reflects transfer from the Chinese existential, *you*. The lack of the plural ending on *beach* is recognizable from other similar errors made by John. Finally, *join in* might be his way of saying *enjoy*. In spite of these errors, however, John showed both comprehension and the ability to paraphrase given information in his own words.

The Third Assessment presented a special problem of interpretation. If scoring were based entirely on John's answers, he would not be showing much improvement, but that would be a distortion of what was happening. As indicated by the field notes from this period, John had become quite an effective speaker of English, mingling easily with English-speaking friends. If Zou had access to his free conversation in English with his peers, he would most likely score higher. The most appropriate level thus appears to be *Intermediate-High* for both listening and speaking.

John's spoken English was far from perfect at this point. Some errors had apparently fossilized, e.g., he still said *I born in Taiwan*. He repeatedly omitted the third-person singular *-s* and the plural *-s* ending (e.g., *My father speak English too; And almost every one of my friend; I like cat very much; School start at eight*), although in one instance (*She go to school*) the error appears influenced by the pronunciation of the researcher's question (saying *D'she go to school?* for *Does she go to school?*). There was one instance of an "invented" unidiomatic expression, *flush my face*. The use of articles was inconsistent (e.g., *wash window, turn off light, close the window*, in response to Zou's question about what he could say or think of in English). On the other hand, when asked to say words in English, John said *a frog, a fish, a book, a clock, a library*, and *a school*, whereas on the Second Assessment he simply gave *word, frog, elephant, book, window, stones, tree, student, teacher*. This ability to use the indefinite article even in a decontextualized situation suggests a fairly good internalization of the rule, but it took a long time (over a year) for John to arrive at this point. (By way of comparison, in response to the same question on the First Assessment, John did not give any vocabulary list but told Zou in Chinese that he could handle greetings. Prompted by Zou's *How are you?*, he produced the formulaic *I'm fine, thank you. And you?*)

Because Zou did not give the role-play questions to avoid further alienating John, there were no examples of the kind of exuberant expressiveness he exhibited on the Second Assessment. Still, a measure of his comfort in English could be seen as he volunteered information about himself, sometimes in rather complex sentences, and qualify his statements as he went along, e.g.

I could like go to a fastfood restaurant and order or I could buy things that I want.

I like cat very much. I like fish. And I also like sports. I go to a basketball team tryout but I got cut . . . Almost every sport except swimming I can't play very well. But I almost like every sport.

Development of Reading

Reading is a relatively lightly explored skills area on the Assessments and sometimes not tested separately from writing. In reading, John moved from *Novice-Low* to *Intermediate-Mid* to *Intermediate-High+*.

On the First Assessment, when presented with the reading passage from *News for Kids* magazine and asked to tell Zou about it after reading, John Sun appeared completely lost. He couldn't even recognize the word *America* in the passage. So Zou let him go. John's performance might be classified as *Novice-Low*. On the Second Assessment, there was no separate score for reading, as reading the celebrity story and writing about it were presented as one task. Based on the difficulty level of the Michael Jackson story and John's good comprehension of it, his reading proficiency may be described as *Intermediate-Mid*.

On the Third Assessment, John read both the science worksheet and the Massasoit story at a fast pace. His comprehension of the science material was high; he got all but one of the answers right. However, because of the problem with this material discussed above, and because of the generally high level of science education in Taiwan schools, it was not entirely clear whether John's performance indicated his listening and reading comprehension of academic material in science. With regard to the Massasoit passage, John could recall three things about him after reading: his name, the first Thanksgiving, and the fact that he was important in American history. These were hardly impressive but the conditions under which the Assessment was given was far from ideal. Judging from the fact that John was able to read the entire *Where the Red Fern Grows* some months ago and understand it well, and that in general he was a good student in his other subjects, these Assessment instruments on reading seemed to pose no problems for him. His reading level would be *Intermediate-High+*, i.e., a little beyond the level described in the *ACTFL Guidelines*

Development of Writing

John's development in writing moved from *Novice-Mid+* to *Intermediate-Mid+* between the first two Assessments, but the second year presented a more complex picture. Depending on topic and genre, John would be anywhere from *Intermediate-Mid+* to *Advanced* by the end of his second year at Cooperville. However, these scores are merely convenient labels to facilitate comparison between focal students. Each piece of writing presents a considerably more complex picture than the label implies.

First Assessment Passage

On the First Assessment, John Sun wrote:

I'm a boy, I like fishing
I like play football. ~~and ba~~
I like frog
I like fish
I like cat

John's handwriting was neat and well-formed. The *I*'s are lined up neatly against the left margin. The letter *f* is written in two strokes, with the top curve pointing upward toward the right; this practice appears to be more of a sign of great care in shaping the letters and a kind of personal flourish, and is not interpreted as capitalization.

In terms of John's apparent ease with English script, given the fairly common presence of English-language advertising (billboards, theater marquees, etc.) in Taiwan, especially in the urban areas, one could safely assume that, even though John had not received formal training in English in school prior to immigration, he had already been exposed to the English alphabet, English word boundaries, capital and lower-case letters, and such. (The same can be said of urban areas like Shanghai, where focal student Martin Zhang was from.) It should be added that handwriting practice in Chinese, an ideographic language, is an extremely important part of formal schooling in all Chinese communities. This is probably especially true in Taiwan, which for years had a consciously promulgated cultural policy emphasizing its status as the true heir to traditional Chinese culture, in contrast to the Westernization of Hong Kong and the cultural destructiveness of Communist China. These generalizations can be applied to other focal students' initial writing samples as well.

In terms of choice of topic, John Sun was the only focal student to depart from the suggested topics of family or school, choosing instead to talk about his hobbies. In view of the profile of his later global English development, this is in keeping with his general sense of confidence and adventurousness in using English, especially in face-to-face interactions.

John's sample fits best into the category of *Listing* in the Gentile scoring guide, which is the lowest of six level for Informative Writing, described as: Paper lists pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic, but does not relate them. A range of information/ideas is presented. (p. 22)

What appears intriguing is the form in which John presented his writing, with the sentences in a list (except for the first two), sharing structural similarity (except for the verb-to-be in the first sentence) and lined up neatly against the left margin. Several factors might have accounted for this presentation:

(1) Zou's adding "up to five sentences," instead of insisting on *half a page*, might have influenced the student to think of sentences as discrete units.

(2) The occurrence of the writing task at the end of the oral and reading portions of the First Assessment suggested to the student that this was a test situation. (In particular, the question-and-answer format in the lengthy oral section might have reinforced such an impression.) As a result, John Sun wrote with extra care, which could account for the painstaking neatness of the penmanship. Also, after what he

might have considered a dismal performance at reading, he might have decided to do well in the writing "test" by doing a simple task that he felt confident about, namely, listing.

On the second line, judging from the crossed-out letters, after *football*, John might have wanted to add *and basketball*. Whether because of uncertainty over the spelling of the longer word or for some other reason, John decided to cross out the attempted addition, which might be a sign of wanting to play it safe. In this scenario, the period after *football*—the sole example of a period in this sample—might have been added retroactively to mark off the desired sentence from the attempted addition.

(3) The third, and most thought-provoking, possibility was that because of the more formal, test-like situation for producing this sample, John had relied on his understanding of what was expected of him whenever writing was requested, learned from Mr. Hinton's classroom. As mentioned in the section describing Mr. Hinton's teaching, the observed writing tasks were characterized by discreteness of the units produced (words, phrases, sentences); favoring structural parallelism to hold such units together (instead of relying on meaning to cohere connected discourse); an emphasis on moving from complete mastery (i.e., freedom from mechanical errors) of simple structures before being allowed to move on; impersonality (little account taken of the student's opinions); and decontextualization. All of these characteristics could have shaped John's perception of the writing task (even when it was couched in a relatively open-ended way) and his performance on it. Of course, even at early stages, Mr. Hinton's teaching involved grouping words, phrases and sentences by commonality of topic. However, this was different from—and represents a lower-level skill than—asserting relationships between the items grouped. Of the six ideas grouped in John's late November sample, the first, *I'm a boy*, is unlike the other five, which are all about what he liked, although it could be argued that all six are about John Sun. Such minimal coherence, however, would not have been seen as a major issue, or might have gone unremarked, in Mr. Hinton's classroom.

This hypothesis about the influence of instruction cannot be conclusively proven, of course. But it is reinforced by the fact that a topic similar to John's, "pets," was taught in Mr. Hinton's class on October 17, 1991, where students were required to write out similar lists on pets that they liked. John Sun happened to be a true lover of pets, as his later compositions would show, so he wasn't *merely* regurgitating a mechanical exercise learned from Mr. Hinton. But the format required by Mr. Hinton probably had a strong influence on his presentation of his sentences.

This hypothesis also receives strong support when some of the corresponding writing samples from other focal students are examined. A fuller discussion of this point will be given later.

In terms of what John could do in writing at this early stage, his knowledge includes: capitalization of the first person pronoun *I*; contractions (*I'm*); indefinite article (one instance); gerund (one instance); subject/verb/object word order (five instances); subject/verb-to-be/complement word order (one instance); and grouping sentences about the same topic together.

In terms of errors, as in using *the class* to refer to classes in the early November passage, John was still unable to use plural nouns to make general statements about entire categories of things (*I like frog* instead of *I like frogs*; *I like cat* instead of *I like cats*). That *I like fish* happens to be correct is most likely just a matter of luck, rather than the result of conscious mastery of the plural form for this word, which constitutes an exception to the plural *-s* rule. While he could use the gerund for *I like fishing*, he omitted the infinitive *to* in *I like play football*, which may reflect transfer from Chinese, in which verbs are not inflected. Beyond the word level, John showed one run-on sentence, using a comma to join *I'm a boy* and *I like fishing*. Finally, except for the period after *football* (which might have been a retroactive addition), the sentences listed do not end in periods, as they should. However, because this time the sentences were not written out in the form of a paragraph, i.e., because sentence boundaries were now marked by separate lines, there was probably less of a pressing need for John to ensure that the sentences ended with periods.

For the Second Assessment, John wrote two pieces, one based on the Michael Jackson reading, one on the school.

Second Assessment: "Michael Jackson" Passage

The piece based on the Michael Jackson story is as follows:

> **Michael Jackson was on August 29, 1958**
> **~~H~~ was When he was five years old**
> **He and his brother go to a singing**
> **club. They got eight dollar every night**
> **Michael Jackson remember sometimes**
> **all the money throw up on the floor.**
> **Sometimes my pocket allmost break.**

For this piece, the prompt did not ask specifically for a summary; John's passage concentrated on the information given in the first paragraph of the story. It is therefore not clear how well John would have fared in a summary assignment in English at this point. (A summary in Chinese obtained half a year later will be discussed in the next section.) However, his comprehension of that first paragraph appears good. The information he conveyed is basically accurate; he was able to keep the sequence of events straight and reproduce it.

Also, even if the resultant expressions are unidiomatic and awkward, John was able to form collocations with English words that he did know (perhaps also referring to Chinese vocabulary) in order to express his understanding of the reading. For example, *singing club* might have combined *singing group* and *nightclub*, or was perhaps derived from Chinese *ge ting*, a place of entertainment where singers perform. In the phrase *money throw up on the floor*, the influence of Chinese might be seen in the addition of preposition *up*. *My pocket almost break* is another example of an unusual collocation showing John's effort to use his own wording.

At the end of his passage, though John did not use quotation marks around *Sometimes my pocket almost break*, he did make an attempt to reproduce the longer quote from Jackson. The switch to the first person without quotation marks may indicate inadequate command of this punctuation mark, or an effort to avoid having to use the embedding required of reported speech, *He said that* plus a noun clause, a structure with which he seems to be having trouble. (See below on the *remember* sentence.)

The sentence *Sometimes my pocket almost break* represents the only "embroidery" John made on the passage—one that still keeps to the "spirit" of the given sentence. (The original reads *I remember my pockets being so full of money that I couldn't keep my pants up.*) Since the focal students were allowed to refer to the reading if necessary, the fact that John relied on his own wording suggests he felt he had enough command of written English at this point to reproduce information.

The only possible evidence of copying might be the first sentence of his passage, *Michael Jackson was on August 29, 1958*, with the word *born* left out. Since the focal students were not expected to memorize information from the reading passage, if John wanted to include Jackson's birthdate, he would have to refer directly to the text, in the meantime keeping up the writing. The leaving out of *born* suggests that a kind of "overload" might have been taking place. Interestingly, when John switched to his own wording, there was no other example of leaving out a part of the verb. Note too that in his own words, he used only simple, single-word verbs—*was, go, got, remember, break*. Also, in the spoken part of the Assessment, John had trouble with the expression *was born*, saying *I born in Taiwan;* thus *was born* in the Michael Jackson story might have been a somewhat confusing structure to him.

When John got to a complex piece of information—Michael Jackson remembering money being thrown by the audience onto the stage—he showed trouble with sentence structure, producing *Michael Jackson remember some times all the money throw up on the floor*. This may reflect difficulty with noun clause embedding (cf. the discussion of reported speech above) or with the passive voice (cf. *was born*).

In this passage, John's command of written English includes the following :

ability to use his own wording to reproduce information from the reading
command of basic subject/verb/object and subject/verb-to-be/complement structure
complex sentence containing a main clause and an adverb clause introduced by *when*
good sense of word boundaries
basically good sense of sentence boundaries (marked by periods)
use of paragraph format for connected discourse

He had trouble with the following:

inconsistency in verb tense (*go* in a past-tense passage)
inconsistency in noun plural (correct in *five years old*, omitted ending in *eight dollar*)

inconsistency in spelling (alternating between *some times* and *sometimes*)
inconsistency in capitalization (using *He* in the middle of a sentence)
trouble with third-person singular (*Jackson remember* should be *Jackson remembers*)
(possibly) trouble with noun clause embedding
trouble with quotation marks for quoted speech

Second Assessment: "School" Passage

The piece on one of the given topics (family or school) is as follows:

My school coperville Jr High
is a good school. I very like
my school, because the class very
interest me. They has very fun
progem. That's why I like my school.

In the original, the letter *r* in the name *cooperville* is smaller than the other letters and is squeezed in between *e* and *v*, obviously an addition. The handwriting appears reasonably smooth, not laborious; the spacing between the first and second, and the second and third, sentences is smaller than that between many of the words, thus giving a crowded appearance of the passage. The letters, in the form of printing, were generally well-formed, with only one of the words, *because*, showing some linkage between letters; the result is halfway between cursive and printing.

John's command of written English includes the following:

mostly correct spelling of words commonly used in the school context
mostly correct use of lower-case and capital letters, without random alternation (except for the lack of capitalization noted below)
some degree of self-monitoring and self-correction of spelling (insertion of *r* in *cooperville*)
consistent capitalization of first person pronoun *I*
capitalization of proper nouns (less than full command)
contraction
the definite and indefinite articles (less than full command)
appositive phrase (*My school coperville Jr High*)
subject/verb/complement word order
subject/verb-to-be/object word order
sentence boundary, marked by capitalization at the beginning and a period at the end
complex sentence containing a main clause and a dependent clause introduced by *because*, with internal punctuation (comma)
paragraph format, introduced by a slight indentation at the beginning
coherence of meaning within the paragraph: general statement of the topic, two supporting sentences, concluding recapitulation

Since the passage is so short, this list gives little clue to the degree of security of John's command of each item, including the ones that appear error-free in the composition. Still, John's skills in written English not based on copying or mechanical transformations are already remarkable.

Most notable was the fact that John produced a piece of connected discourse; within the space of four sentences (one of them containing a subordinate clause), he managed to have an introduction, body, and conclusion, even though the two supporting sentences were not further developed (What aspects of the classes interested him? How was the program "fun"?). In attempting to describe John's passage in some larger context of writing proficiency, Wong consulted , and found it most closely resembling the type of writing called *Extended Opinion*, which receives is the second lowest level of six in Persuasive Writing on the Gentile scoring guides (p. 23). Papers of the *Extended Opinion* type "include a statement of opinion and reasons to support the opinion. However, the reasons are only briefly presented or the explanations are confusing" (p. 143). This seems to describe John's Second Assessment "school" passage quite well. Using this label is only meant to underscore the point that what John knew about "persuasive writing," about a year into his schooling in English, was already beyond the most basic level of *Opinion* (i.e., stating an opinion without support, or with inconsistent or unrelated support). Furthermore, the Gentile rubric's description would not capture the fact that John's four-sentence passage, structurally speaking, can be considered a skeletal essay, having the requisite introduction, body, and conclusion.

The problems in John's "school" passage are of the following types:

lack of capitalization for *Cooperville*
lack of period marking abbreviation after *Jr*
lack of commas marking off the appositive phrase
unclear antecedent for *they*
misspelling of *program* as *progem*, possibly reflecting uncertainty about the spelling of the unstressed schwa sound, which can correspond to a number of written vowel letters; and about the *r* sound
lack of use of plural noun for general statements (*the class interest me*)
lack of subject-verb agreement (*They has*)
misuse of *very* as an adverb (*I very like my school, because the class very interest me*), reflecting direct translation from Chinese, which uses the same word, *hen*, to modify both adjectives and verbs

Of these problems, the first four are not only minor but readily shared with native speakers of English who are beginning writers. In fact, an appositive not marked by a pair of commas is sometimes acceptable, while the vague antecedent for *they* (referring loosely to "the school," "the people responsible for running the school") is acceptable in colloquial speech and informal writing based on it.

The most revealing of beginning ESL status are probably the last three. *They have* is a high-frequency combination in English, so that, with any degree of "automatization" at all on the writer's part, the combination *they has* would have appeared jarring. The phrase *the class interest me* (*very* is discussed below), on the

surface a subject-verb agreement error as well, is actually more complex. As a school program is made up of more than one class, a native speaker of English would most likely say *the classes interest me*, as a general statement about why he liked the school. In other words, even if John had produced *the class interests me*, showing correct subject-verb agreement and correct use of the third-person singular *-s*, he would have shown an un-native-like usage of the singular noun where a plural noun is expected.

The misuse of *very* clearly shows transfer from Chinese. *Hen*, translatable as *very*, *a lot*, or *very much*, is used frequently in Chinese and, in terms of meaning, has somewhat less force than its counterparts in English, sometimes functioning more like a filler than an intensifier. The repeated appearance of *very* in such a short passage and its unidiomatic usage ignoring distinctions between *very*, *a lot*, and *very much*, suggest that John Sun was translating from Chinese quite directly.

However, even at this point, John's sentence *I very like my school, because the class very interest me* did *not* represent a total word-for-word translation. If it were to be rendered into Chinese, the first part, *I very like my school*, would indeed be a word-for-word equivalent sentence in Chinese, *wo hen xihuan wode xuexiao*. However, since there is no exact equivalent for the verb *interest* in Chinese, the part *because the class very interest me* must have involved some understanding of how *interest* works in English. (The word *fun* is another example of an English expression lacking an exact equivalent in Chinese, indicating John had begun to move away from translation. Nevertheless, using *fun* in an adjective slot does not call for the kind of manipulation of word order required in saying *the class very interest me*.

In overall quality, John Sun's "free" composition (i.e., not controlled or guided) was better than his "paraphrase" composition based on the Michael Jackson story. This seems to be contrary to what one might argue from Mr. Hinton's teaching philosophy: that the less open-ended an assignment, the more likely a student is to perform well. John's "paraphrase" piece shows more signs of strain due to the need of adhering to the reference point, i.e., the reading, whereas his "school" passage allows him to stay more within the limits of what he can handle. Since the "paraphrase" task is an essential part of academic English, LEP students should start practicing it as early as possible. On the other hand, the "free" composition is an equally important type of assignment, as it gives them an opportunity to experience success in expressing themselves using the English resources that they are comfortable with.

The discourse coherence of John's Second Assessment "school" passage—despite its brevity and the presence of transfer and other errors—raises the question of its source(s). During his visits to Mr. Hinton's classroom, Zou saw hardly any classroom teaching focusing on connected discourse. However, this does not preclude the possibility that such teaching may have taken place at other times; moreover, students may have developed a sense of the Introduction-Body-Conclusion structure from the more advanced reading and controlled writing materials. Finally, John may have transferred skills in connected discourse from his Chinese literacy, as the Chinese writing sample discussed further on strongly suggests.

Second Assessment: Introspective Report

When asked to comment in Chinese on his English writing, John Sun made the following points:

> I pay a lot of attention to verbs but not to spelling. I also pay attention to the content of what I write. I want to use adjectives to describe the characteristics of things, such as animals.
>
> I am afraid of being scolded by the teacher.
>
> American teachers don't seem to care too much about the content. Bad content would not affect the grade. They care about sentences and spelling. Bad spelling would lower the grade.

These remarks portray an ambitious, thoughtful, deliberate, and self-confident writer who believed content was most important in writing but got frustrated at the divorce from content he experienced in the ELD classroom and felt constrained by the grading system to conform to more mechanical standards. John sentiments suggest that the researchers' opinions about Mr. Hinton's classroom were not just a matter of outsiders' bias or an imposition of their own expectations on the students. The discrepancy between John's ability to deal with content and the type of written work prevalent in Mr. Hinton's classroom is underscored by the following Chinese writing sample.

Chinese Writing Sample: Book Summary

When Zou returned to Cooperville Junior High in Fall 1992, after a break in his relations with the focal students, he was able to persuade John Sun to produce a writing sample in Chinese. His prompt was simply "Write me something in Chinese." John asked for a topic, and Zou said, "something you like best." John chose to write a summary of a book that he just read, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, a popular story for junior high students (unsimplified for ESL students). An avid animal lover, John chose a topic that he truly cared about (see Figure 2).

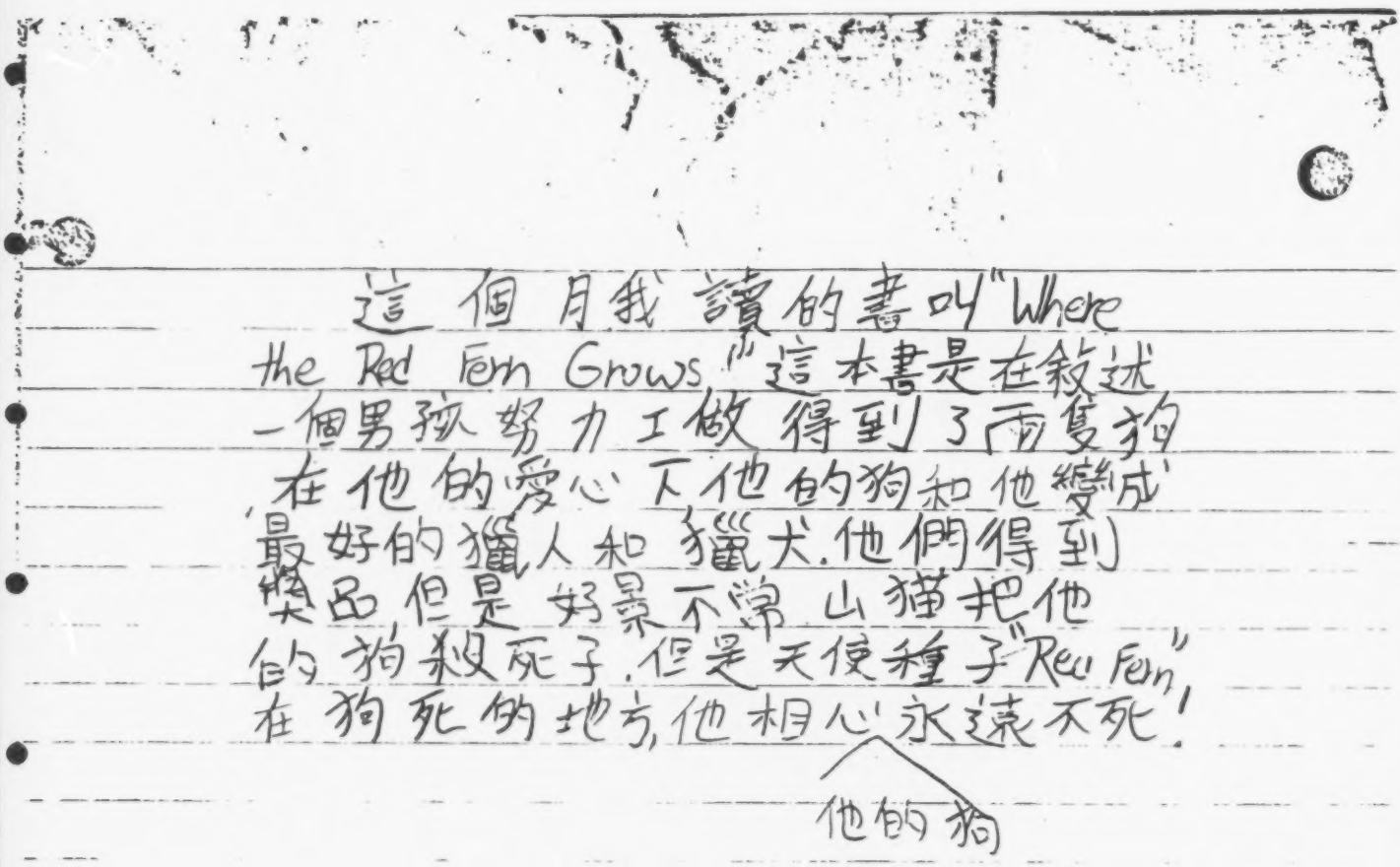


Figure 2. John Sun's Chinese passage on *Where the Red Fern Grows* (11/92).

[English translation by Wong]

> **The book I read this month is entitled "Where the Red Fern Grows." This book narrates how a boy got two dogs by working hard. Under his loving care, his dogs and he became the best hunter and hunting dogs. They won awards, but good things don't last. A mountain lion killed his dogs. But an angel planted "Red Fern" where the dogs died. He believes that his dogs would never die!**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This Chinese writing sample, produced over a year after John's arrival in the U.S., is interesting in many ways. In terms of command of the Chinese script, the passage shows some erosion. John used a nonstandard form for the character *mao* (in *shanmao*, literally "mountain cat," for mountain lion); a wrong character for *le* in *xile*, "died," and in *zhong le*, "planted"; and a wrong character, a homonym, for *xin* in *xiangxin*, "believe." The first problem is minor; the last two are errors that interfere with understanding, and furthermore involve high-frequency expressions. The mistake with *le* is especially serious, as it is not only a grammatically important particle signifying aspect but also a particle of only two strokes that should not normally cause a problem. Also, in the last sentence of the paragraph, the expected idiomatic expression about the dogs is *tade gou jingshen yongyuan busi*, "his dogs' spirit would never die." Leaving out the words for "spirit" makes the sentence sound illogical when it isn't.

On the whole, however, John's characters are well-formed, suggesting a solid education in Chinese, and he has retained the ability to produce structurally complicated characters, in one case, a character of as many as 18 strokes, *lie*, which is often written in simplified form even by Taiwan Chinese. (Chinese characters were systematically simplified by the Communists on the mainland as part of a national policy to improve literacy. The practice was seen as destructive of traditional Chinese culture and rejected in Taiwan. However, a certain amount of simplification has always taken place in Chinese, and some less "outrageously" simplified characters are used by Taiwan Chinese as well. After the post-Mao "thaw," the People's Republic of China has reverted to traditional characters in certain contexts, e.g., publications aimed at an overseas audience.) The coexistence of errors in commonly used, structurally simple characters and the retention of structurally complex ones suggests that John's written Chinese had been in disuse in everyday life; complex characters, from having been drilled heavily, were paradoxically better retained.

Other features also indicate a rather highly developed literacy in Chinese. For example, the Chinese phrase rendered here as "good things don't last" is an example of the use of *chengyu*, "set phrases," four-character expressions, sometimes condensing allusions to Chinese history and literature, which are a hallmark of "literariness" and are taught in schools as part of vocabulary development. Another example of developed literacy is the use of *xushu*, "narrate," instead of the more vernacular *shuo*, "tell," to introduce his summary.

Most remarkable about this passage is the conciseness and precision of the summary, and the skillful use of cohesive devices to hold it together (*this book, but*, etc.). Unlike the Michael Jackson passage, which reproduces only the information given in the first paragraph of a five-paragraph story, the Chinese sample shows the ability to retain the outline of an entire story and reproduce its main points. Of course, since a novel has a plot line while a profile of a celebrity does not, it may have been easier for John to summarize *Where the Red Fern Grows* in either language. However, if nothing else, the contrast between John's performance on these two tasks suggests how easy it might be, for a teacher without knowledge of his high literacy in Chinese and with the kind of teaching philosophy articulated by Mr. Hinton, to misinterpret his signs of strain in the Jackson passage as a kind of

cognitive underdevelopment. Furthermore, the Chinese sample suggests a sophistication in connected discourse (academic discourse at that) far, far beyond the level of fill-in-the-blanks, transformation exercises, and listing which were the usual fare in Mr. Hinton's classroom. One could imagine the frustration experienced by John in being required to perform endlessly at such tasks.

Booklet on Dragonwings

In November 1993, about two months after the beginning of the new school year in Sheltered Core, John Sun produced a booklet in response to one of Mrs. Garcia's "image-words" reading response exercises. It was based on Laurence Yep's novel *Dragonwings*. The given topics were characters, settings, and protagonist Moon Shadow's first impressions of America. Each students' pictures and/or writing were stapled into a booklet. John Sun's booklet was given to Zou by Mrs. Garcia.

The amount of writing produced by John at this point was extremely limited, but in addition to showing his development in writing, the booklet also gives a good indication of the kind of teaching practiced by Mrs. Garcia.

For characters and settings, John did no writing at all, but instead drew two rather elaborate and well-executed pictures (see Figure 3). The first one is a cover for the booklet showing Moon Shadow's immediate family with a dragon in the background. The second page shows Moon Shadow flying a kite on a hilltop in a countryside setting. On the third page, John wrote:

> **#2 Impressistion of America**
> **The First day I come to America, I feel so strange about everything, but there is so many Chinese, so I won't feel too c**

Underneath this passage is a picture of a street with buildings labeled (in Chinese) Gym, House of a Hundred Flowers, and House of Ten Thousand Flowers, the latter two phrases being common euphemistic names for brothels common during an earlier historical era. (Even the term *jianshenfang* may be a modern-day, urban euphemism for a house of prostitution.) The sign for House of Ten Thousand Flowers hangs over a slightly curved doorway, suggesting a Chinese architectural motif. Two curvaceous women are shown lounging in doorways. One is labeled illegibly, in what looks like a garbled or crossed-out Chinese character. Two short boys, drawn in a cartoonish way, each with a heart hovering over his head, are shown walking down the street, approaching one of the brothels. They are labeled in English with the names of two of John's Chinese friends, Matt Chang (one of the focal students) and Jay Yan.

Dragonwings, a novel set in the San Francisco Chinatown of the late 19th and early 20th century, mentions the presence of brothels and prostitutes in Chinatown while giving historical background about immigration restrictions on the Chinese during that period and the resultant creation of "bachelor societies" with no regular families. But the book gives no detailed description of the brothels or their names. Thus the picture represents John Sun's invention. His elaboration on this minor

Figure 3. John Sun's *Dragonwings* booklet (on the following three pages).

#12

BEST COPY AVAILABL

Dragonwings

Moon shadow

#2 Impression of America

The First day I come to America, I feel so strange about everything, but there is so many Chinese, so, I won't feel too c

#3

(Names altered to protect identity of students)

background subject in *Dragonwings*—prostitution—appears to serve several functions: to draw upon his Chinese "cultural literacy" by supplying details like the curved doorway, realistic names of brothels, and Chinese signs; to experience some superiority over a teacher who can't read Chinese; to express some of his adolescent sexual interest under the guise of doing an assignment (as mentioned above, the Chinese boys read Chinese-language comics of a rather violent or risqué nature); to play an inside joke on his friends; to exercise his artistic talents, which were considerably more advanced than his written English. It was Mrs. Garcia's teaching philosophy and practice that gave John Sun this kind of expressive opportunity.

Because Mrs. Garcia's philosophy of teaching ESL was so different from Mr. Hinton's, she gave her Sheltered Core students a great deal of latitude in the reading response exercises, respecting their subjective responses even to the point of accepting pictures without writing. In fact, Zou remarked that the picture booklets were "almost sacred" to Mrs. Garcia—she would not dream of altering them in any way. Compared to his passages from the Second Assessment, John's passage on "First Impressions" actually looks weaker; not only was it shorter, it wasn't even completed but was cut off mid-word. *Impressition* may suggest uncertainty about pronunciation (an extra syllable had been added) or a reliance of letter sequences learned in chunks (*-ition* for noun ending). The use of the present tense instead of past tense suggests avoidance of the more difficult tense. (The character Moon Shadow is supposed to be reminiscing about his arrival in the U.S. in the past.) The sketchiness of this writing sample does not tell us much about John's writing development, but the booklet as a whole tells us a lot about the complexity of his psychosocial development which outstripped his English proficiency, especially in writing, but nevertheless sought expression in some form.

Third Assessment: "School" Passage

At the Third Assessment given in February 1993, in response to the request to write about either family or school again, John produced the following:

> **My school is a very fun place. It have**
> **a lot of students. The teacher is kind, but**
> **sometimes they are mean too. I like my school**
> **because it teaches me alot of things like**
> **math, English and sports. The only thing bad**
> **is my school is too small. I like big school**
> **that have more students and properties.**

Zou described John as doing this piece quickly and rather dispiritedly, showing familiarity, perhaps even over-familiarity, with this type of writing assignment. His output on the same topic had moved from a list of sentences to a four-sentence mini-essay to this longer piece, but Zou felt that he could easily have produced more. He just wasn't at all interested in taking part in the Assessment.

While this paragraph, just like the Second one, would still be described as *Extended Opinion* according to the Gentile scoring guide for Persuasive Writing, this is a more elaborate and confident example. As in the spoken output on this

occasion, John was able to qualify his statements with additional clauses as he produced them, to give a more nuanced picture of how he felt about school.

Two aspects of sentence structure are noteworthy about this passage. The noun clause structure with which John had trouble in the Michael Jackson passage is found here in *The only thing bad is my school is too small.* Also, the adjective clause using *that* (easier to master that adjective clauses using *which* and *who/whom*) appears to be a structure developed by this time, judging from the example here (*I like big school that have more students and properties*) and the one on the oral/aural portion of the Assessment (*I could buy things that I want*). The overuse and misuse of *very*, traceable to Chinese *hen*, had stopped by this time.

Subject-verb agreement continues to be a problem (*It have a lot of students*), as does the use of the plural for general statements (*I like school that have more students;* cf. *the class very interest me* on the Second Assessment).

On the basis of this writing sample alone, it is difficult to determine whether John Sun had progressed from a little above *Intermediate-Mid* to *Intermediate-High*.

Personal Narrative: "The Unlucky Day," 4/93

One day in late April 1993, as John Sun's obnoxious behavior intensified and Mrs. Garcia felt increasing pressure to advance him to Regular Core, she turned to Zou, whom she normally keep at a distance. It was one of only a few interactions initiated by Mrs. Garcia. It was possible that she thought Zou and Wong might have had contact with John outside of the school setting and might have wanted to seek their understanding for the decision, if not cooperation in persuading him or his family.

Mrs. Garcia made her point by showing Zou a one-page essay written two weeks earlier by John entitled "The Unlucky Day," with a filled-out Self Evaluation Sheet attached (see Figure 4). She was extremely emotional in this encounter, on the verge of tears, pointing to the many grammatical and mechanical errors in this essay to justify her keeping John in Sheltered Core. Apparently John had struck up a friendship with the Regular Core teacher, Mrs. O'Connor, during the school trip to Yosemite, and asked her to look over this essay as evidence of his proficiency. This fact, coupled with John's open criticism of Mrs. Garcia's stubbornness in the essay, must have caused her considerable distress.

Figure 4. John Sun's essay, "The Unlucky Day" (on the following page).

(Names altered to protect the identity of the teachers)

April 12, 1993

The Unlucky day

The unlucky day started with when I feel sleepy during school time. I don't know why I feel so tire. My eyes are so heavy and I feel my arms and legs are lock by a Master lock.

In first period I cut myself in metal class. In my P.E class I can not open my locker to get my PE. clothes out! I am so that I wear my shorts backwards. When I get out of boy's locker room, all the people laughed at me; my face got red, I wished there was a hole in the ground so I can have hiden in there.

My E.S.L teacher, Ms Garcia, told me I can not go to Mrs. O'Connor's class because of a lot of mistakes in my writing, and not even if I have passed the C.T.B.S. test. I don't care if I have to work twice as hard as everyone in regular class, but Ms Garcia is just too stubborn.

What an unlucky day!

You could have written a paragraph about each one.
Your introductory ¶ is not "tied into" the rest of the composition

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The editing marks and corrections on the pages were in the handwriting of someone who signed in the corner but whose name was not recognized by Zou; possibly he/she was Mrs. O'Connor's aide. The corrections, by the way, were confusingly presented (sometimes a code was used, such as *t* for tense problems, while at other times an entire word was crossed out and replaced). Sometimes a correction was unnecessary (e.g., changing *because of a lot of mistakes* to *because I make a lot of mistakes*). There was even an instance of a correction producing an error (*I can hide in there* was changed to *I could have hiden in there*).

This essay could be labeled as between *Intermediate-Mid* and *Intermediate-High* by the *ACTFL* scale, or somewhere between *Undeveloped Story* and *Basic Story* by the Gentile scale, although neither scoring guide adequately captures the full combination of discourse and formal characteristics shown in "The Unlucky Day." For Mrs. Garcia, this writing sample demonstrated John Sun's unreadiness for exit to Regular Core.

By this time John had obviously developed greater facility with writing and was capable of producing a multi-paragraph narrative essay on a personal topic. He had a firm command of paragraph form and generally of sentence boundaries. However, when he had to narrate a sequence, his punctuation became haphazard and sentence boundaries blurred (*When I get out of boy's locker room all the people is laughing at me, my face get red*). Omission of the verb-to-be still took place (*Mrs. Garcia just too stubborn*). In addition, there were some word-level problems with prepositions (*a hole on the ground* instead of *in the ground*, apparently due to transfer from Chinese *dishang*) and articles (*What the unlucky day!*). However, the most striking problem with this personal narrative is the problem with verbs.

When this essay is read alongside the *Dragonwings* sentence, it can seen that John was apparently continuing his strategy of avoiding the past tense by using virtually all his verbs in the simple, i.e., unconjugated, form. Depending on the specific verb used, this strategy could result in a "correct" form (*I cut myself in metal class*), a "tense problem" in the first or third person (*my face get red; the unlucky day start*), or else a combined "tense" and "subject-verb agreement problem" (*my arms and legs is lock*). If this analysis of John's strategy is valid, the question arises as to how John could eventually learn the correct forms if this hit-or-miss process was not clarified for him. This in turn raises the larger issue of the role of explicit "grammar" teaching in a "process" classroom where the students are non-native speakers.

John's disgruntlement with Mr. Hinton's neglect of content in favor of mechanical correctness appeared to be a problem that would be addressed precisely by Mrs. Garcia's type of teaching. Yet as John's errors accumulated over the months, even as staunch an advocate of "meaning" as Mrs. Garcia reached breaking point. A writing teacher interested in vividness of voice and originality of language would find "The Unlucky Day" appealing in several ways, for example, in his use of the striking image *I feel my arms and legs is lock by a Master lock*, or, in John's own unabashed words on the Self Evaluation Sheet, his *great sence of hummer* in the sequence of mishaps in the second paragraph. But his brazen self-evaluation of a 6 *because there isn't any mistake* is patently false and seems a gesture of protest and pique calculated to drive Mrs. Garcia to distraction.

Personal Narrative: "Fire," 5/93

When Zou asked Mrs. Garcia for a photocopy of the "Unlucky Day" paper, Mrs. Garcia probably finally realized that many more things than the Language Assessments would be of interest to the researchers. Maybe feeling that the "Unlucky Day" essay was not a good specimen of her students' performance and that she needed to demonstrate that even John was making satisfactory progress, Mrs. Garcia voluntarily gave Zou the following two versions of an extended personal narrative that she considered presentable, saying that even the first draft was very interesting and readable in terms of content. She said that John's mother did the editing and suggested changes, then John turned in the recopied version; the exact extent of Mrs. Sun's contributions or any further corrections by Mrs. Garcia was unknown. The first draft was entitled "Fire Compersation" (for *compensation*?), the clean version, "Fire" (see Figures 5 and 6). It wasn't clear what the prompt was exactly for this or the "Unlucky Day" essay, but apparently Mrs. Garcia gave her Sheltered Core students considerable freedom to write about their own experiences. Perhaps it was because John had an opportunity to elaborate on his favorite topic, pet fish, in the context of an apparently autobiographical "big event," that he felt motivated to rewrite extensively.

The "Fire" essay might safely be labeled *Advanced* according to the *ACTFL Guidelines*, and *Elaborated Story*, the highest of the six levels for Narrative Writing, on the Gentile scale. It represents John's most impressive performance in writing so far, something that would charm any reader open to appreciating what ESL students could accomplish even with imperfect mastery of the language. The essay is well structured, with an eye-catching opening and a satisfactory closure. The integration of personal perceptions and sentiments, movement of events, details of setting, sensory input, and other characters' behavior and comments is skillful. The narrator's voice is vibrant and distinctive. From the beginning sentence, *The lights of fire engine made night into day*, to the narrator's relieved but qualified conclusion, *I am so glad that my fish are alive. Well, almost all*, John's rhetorical control is extremely sophisticated indeed.

Several features of John's writing here are intriguing. One is the differential development of vocabulary according to interest. He had trouble spelling or correctly copying common words like *safe* (not *save*) or *skin* (not *ski*), and had trouble coming up with *band-aid*, which he first wrote as *bade-da*, possibly influenced by Chinese *bengdai*, "bandage." But he could name his fish with great technical precision if not perfect accuracy in spelling: *30 swordtails fish, 10 eels, 1 clown loach, and 1 Demsel fish.*

Figure 5. John Sun's essay, "Fire Compensation" (on the following four pages).

Fire Compensation

The lights of fire engines made night into day. The noise of police car woke me up. All of a sudden a strong water broke the window and splashed on me. That brought me back from my dream. That also and made me (freezing!! freeze.

My mom and my sister got up with (a) the sleeping face to see what is (was) going on. A fire fighter climbed up on the roof from the window and shout "Run for your Life!" My mom and my sister got scared and run out of the house. When I was about to go after them I thought of my fish. I run as fast as a race-car into my storage room to get all my fish. I only have a few seconds to bring my about 30 Sword tails fishes, 10 eels, Clown Loach and a Demsel fish. I couldn't decided which one to take and which will survive and which one to leave. Demsel fish was the most expensive one, but one of my Sword tails was pregnant. I closed my eyes and pointed to one fish. That fish was the Demsel fish.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When I put the Demsel fish in a plastic bag, the fire fighter found me. He was strong, he grabe me immediately tightly and brought me to the save place.

My mom was sad and mad. She said I shouldn't go to save my fish, because that's too dangerous and made her worry to death. Then she said see me and the fish alive. it was good to have the fish and me at survive. After a while the engine fire was put out. The fire shake a small fire began to disappear. And then there was only small fire, that could be extinguish killed by a bottle of water. Because after the fire, we went to my uncle's house to finish my sleep. When I got up. It was 10 o'clock in the morning already. I hurried to check the Demsel that was in the plastic bag. It's dead! I should know that a fish couldn't live in the small bag without an air pump.

it was my fault that I

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

band-aid

There were two ways to take off a band-da. First way was put it into warm water and peel of it slowly and gently. Then used a small scissors to cut off the hair that has been picked up. The second way is hold on to one end then siiiiiii! it would That way will pull up every hair that was on your skin, may be even peel your skin. One

My feeling right know was the second way of to taking off band-aid. My sister exclaimed that "You should change the water before I went to bed." What a stupid girl! I explained to her that Beluga fish is a salt water fish, a marine animal. I couldn't put fresh water in the bag.

returned

When we go back to our house. My home didn't got much damaged. There only was the broken window and few ashes dusty and burned marks. All the furniture are still in good condition was fine and still working. When I went to check the rest of my fish, they all alive. Because the fire fighter controlled the fire before it burned my house in time before the house being burn

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

am so glad
I are all my fish is alive!
Well, almost all.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 6. John Sun's essay, "Fire" (on the following three pages).

May 14, 1993
ESL Per. 3

Fire

The lights of fire engine made night into day. The siren of police car woke me up. All of a sudden a strong water broke the window and splashed on me. That brought me back from my dream and made me freeze.

My mom and my sister got up with a sleeping face to see what was going on. A fire fighter climbed up on the roof and shouted, "Run for your life!" My mom and my sister got scared and run out of the house. When I was about to go after them I thought of my fish. I run as fast as a racing-car into my pet room to get all my fish. I only had a few seconds to bring my 30 swordtails fish, 10 eels, 1 Clown Loach and 1 Demsel fish. I couldn't decide which one to take and which one to leave. Demsel fish was the most expensive one, but one of my Swordtails was pregnant. I closed my eyes and pointed to one of them. The Demsel fish turned out to be my first priority to be taken cared.

When I put the Densel fish in a plastic bag, a fire fighter found me. He was so strong as to grabe me immediately to the save place.

My mom was mad. She said I shouldn't go to save my fish, because that's too dangeraues and made her worry to death. Then she said it was good to see me and the fish alive. After a while the fire like wiggling snakes were gradually being put out. There was only small fire left, which could be extinguished by a battle of water. Afterwards we went to my uncle's house to try to get some more sleep. When I got up, it was 10 O'clock in the morning. I hurried to check the Densel that was in the plastic bag. It's dead! It was my fault that leaved a fish in a small bag without an air pump.

There were two ways to take off a band-aid. First way was to put it into warm wooter and to pell it slowly and gently, then to use a smal pair of scissors to cut off the hair which has been picked up. The second way was to hold on one end of the band-aid, then Siiiii! It would pull out the hair that was on your ski! Ouch!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My feeling right now was the second way to take off a band-aid. My sister exlaimed "You should change the water before going to bed." What a stupid girl! I explained to her that Demsel fish is salt water fish, a marine animal. I couldn't add fresh water in the bag.

When we returned to our house. It didn't get much damaged. There was the broken window and few ashes. All the furniture are still in good condition. When I went to check the rest of my fish, they all are alive. The fire fighter controlled the fire in time before the house being burned down. I am so glad that my fish are alive. Well, almost all.

John's knack for creative word use and striking imagery, which one could glimpse in the "master lock" image in "The Unlucky Day," is amply confirmed in the "Fire" essay. Examples abound: *My mom and my sister got up with a sleeping face; I run as fast as a racing-car into my pet room; the fire like wiggling snakes were gradually being put out.* Best of all is the "band-aid" analogy, which at first reads like a digression and turns out to be apt and memorable, down to the onomatopoeic *Siiiii!* However, most of these wonderfully spirited expressions would strike a native speaker of English as somewhat unidiomatic, somewhat "exotic." Would John lose this originality of expression as he gradually became more widely read in English and learned the "permissible" collocations in English? How does an ESL teacher balance the need to lead the students toward "native-like-ness" in English usage with the desirability of preserving any charm or vividness resulting from relative linguistic inadequacy: from a learner having to stretch the limits of his/her linguistic knowledge, in order to communicate some deeply felt experience?

Matt Chang: A Profile

In Taiwan, Matt Chang attended "night school" to learn English before coming to the U.S. and started at Cooperville Junior High in mid-October 1991, i.e., over a month later than most of the students in Mr. Hinton's class.

He was given the First Language Assessment November 12, 1991; the Second, May 21, 1992; the Third, April 16, 1993.

Several characteristics are noteworthy about Matt's development in English. He remained shaky in his command of listening and speaking even after two years at Cooperville; his comprehension of academic lecturing was weak on the Second Assessment, and on the Third he still relied on guessing even for fairly common phrases about everyday life. But something about his general performance must have fitted well into the school's demands, for he was seen as making impressive progress, and when rumor had him moving into Regular English at Huntington School in Lagunita, it was believed.

Specifically regarding his writing, on both the First and Second Assessments, without being explicitly instructed, he produced lists of sentences of the kind commonly practiced in Mr. Hinton's classroom, showing highly successful internalization of the teacher's demands. This contrasts with, for example, John Sun's "mini-essay" on school which was a piece of connected discourse despite limited skills in constructing accurate phrases and sentences. His writing was characterized by neatness and attention to accuracy, which were prized qualities in academic writing—more prized than a spirited voice or vivid imagery, which were John's fortes.

Matt's Chinese writing sample showed fluency and sophisticated vocabulary that indicated not only a strong Chinese literacy background, but specifically previous experience with a genre of academic writing—*dushu xinde*—comparable to reading responses or book reports.

Development of Listening and Speaking

Matt moved from *Novice-Low* at the First Assessment (with 47 out of 71 turns in Chinese) to *Intermediate-Low* at the Second (with 5 turns out of 105 in Chinese, all

the Chinese ones being role-play instructions given by Zou). At the Third, given almost two years after his arrival in the U.S., Matt tested at the same level, even though now all the exchanges were in English.

Development of Reading

Matt's reading comprehension developed from *Novice-Low* to *Intermediate-Mid* to *Intermediate-High* based on his performance on the three Assessments. At the First, he could not read any of the pieces in the *News for Kids* magazine. (Before this occasion, his copied schedule on his data card indicated possibly *Novice-Low*-reading comprehension.) His reading comprehension of the Michael Jackson story on the Second was solid and his writing sample based on it showed that he read and understood more than the opening paragraphs. On the science and Massasoit readings at the Third Assessment, he read fast and accurately, getting all the questions right.

Development of Writing

When Matt Chang was first enrolled at Cooperville Junior High, he had trouble with copying his class schedule onto the back of his data card, which would suggest a *Novice-Low* designation. *PE* was written as *PB*; *ESL* was written correctly in one place but as *ESR* in another; and a teacher's name, *Golden*, was written as *Golben*. These errors indicate that Matt Chang could not distinguish between *L* and *R* aurally (as it turned out, orally too); did not understand what the abbreviations stood for; did not recognize *Golden* as a common word (name and adjective); and did not recognize the unusualness of *Golben*. On the other hand, the teachers' names and the abbreviations for his courses were listed without any context, whereas decoding and copying meaningful words like *car* or *boy* might be easier. Thus Matt's inability to copy them did not mean that he had no prior meaningful exposure to English when he attended "night school" in Taiwan.

At his First Assessment, Matt produced the following in response to the prompt to write something about family or school; his level would be about *Novice-High*.

My classroom is in 26.
My school is in copenville.
I have many friends.
I like basketball.
These have many classroom.

This list was similar to that produced by John Sun, but displayed better control of sentence boundary (marked by period), a greater variety of syntactical patterns, and beginning control of the noun plural ending *-s*. Matt had trouble with capitalizing proper nouns and spelling the name Cooperville correctly (possibly confusing the letter shapes of lower-case *n* and *r*). And the misuse of *these have* (for *there are* or *it [the school] has*) influenced by the Chinese existential *you*, is an extremely common error among Chinese speakers which could even be considered a rather reliable marker of Chinese-language background among beginning learners of English.

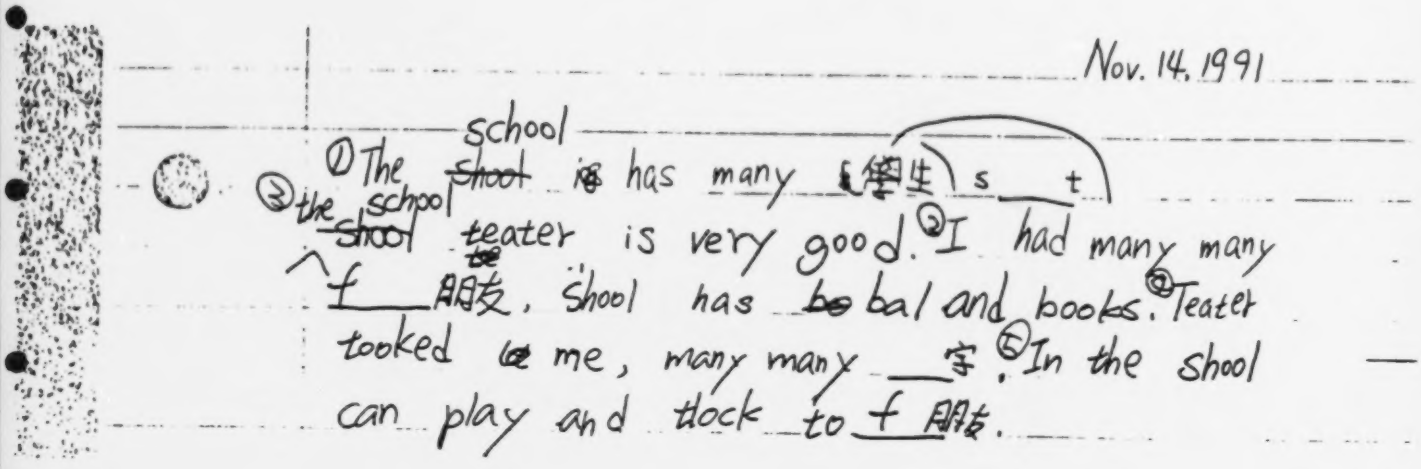
The situation under which Matt produced this list of sentences was similar to that for John Sun. In other words, the clarification of "up to five sentences" might have influenced the format of his writing. Given this circumstance, one might or might not be able to deduce that Matt's writing showed internalization of the concept of writing manifested in Mr. Hinton's teaching—that writing is a collection of unrelated or loosely related sentences used to display one's knowledge of English vocabulary and sentence patterns. However, the idea that such internalization did play a part is strongly supported by the samples produced by other Chinese students at this point, and by Matt's sample at the Second Assessment almost a year later.

Besides Matt, Samuel Feng, a prospective focal student who was later not selected for the project, also produced a list:

1. **My school have a good teacher.**
2. **My school have many class.**
3. **I like art, becuse art teacher ~~teaet~~ teach many print.**
4. **My school have a Esl class or English class and many class.**
5. **Since — is ~~u~~ very bate class.**

The original is double-spaced and the numbers are outside the left margin of the lined notepaper. What is intriguing about Samuel's sample is that at no time did Zou suggest numbering the sentences: this was entirely the student's decision, showing a kind of "baseline" or "default" understanding that unless instructed otherwise, writing meant writing numbered sentences as a neatly lined-up list.

This analysis is further supported by Audrey So's writing sample for the First Assessment, which is reproduced in Figure 7 for comparison:


Nov. 14, 1991

school

① The ~~shool~~ is has many 學生 s t

② the school ~~shool~~ teater is very good. ③ I had many many f 朋友. shool has ~~bo~~ bal and books. ④ Teatet tooked me, many many 字. ⑤ In the shool can play and tlock to f 朋友.

Figure 7. Audrey So's writing sample for the First Assessment.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Note that, even though Audrey produced her five sentences in paragraph form rather than list form, she did have numbers for the sentences. Audrey's numbers were circled and written a little above the line, between units that she understood to be sentences, and sometimes directly above a period; number 3 actually protruded beyond the left margin. These features strongly suggest that after producing her sentences in paragraph form, Audrey realized that she should have put in numbers, as was typically required in Mr. Hinton's writing exercises. So she inserted the numbers as an afterthought, putting them in circles to mark off the numbers from the text now that the margin and proper spacing were not available for that purpose. In other words, at this point (November 1991), when Audrey was told to "write something," her existing tendency was to write in paragraph form. But the training from Mr. Hinton's class was beginning to take hold, so she "corrected" herself by adding numbering, to conform as much as possible to her understanding of what was expected of her short of recopying the sentences in list form.

The First Assessment writing sample of another focal student, Martin Zhang, strengthened this hypothesis that some of the Chinese speakers came in with at least a strong habit of writing connected discourse in paragraph form. This will be discussed in greater detail in the profile on Martin.

One final, and quite compelling, piece of evidence to show the effect of Mr. Hinton's instruction on the student's internalized concept and production of writing came again from Matt Chang. At the Second Assessment, given in May 20, 1992, he wrote a piece about his home:

> **My home is apartment.**
> **It has balcony and garage.**
> **It isn't big.**
> **It has three bedroom, two bathroom, and**
> **one family room.**
> **It's a wood apartment.**

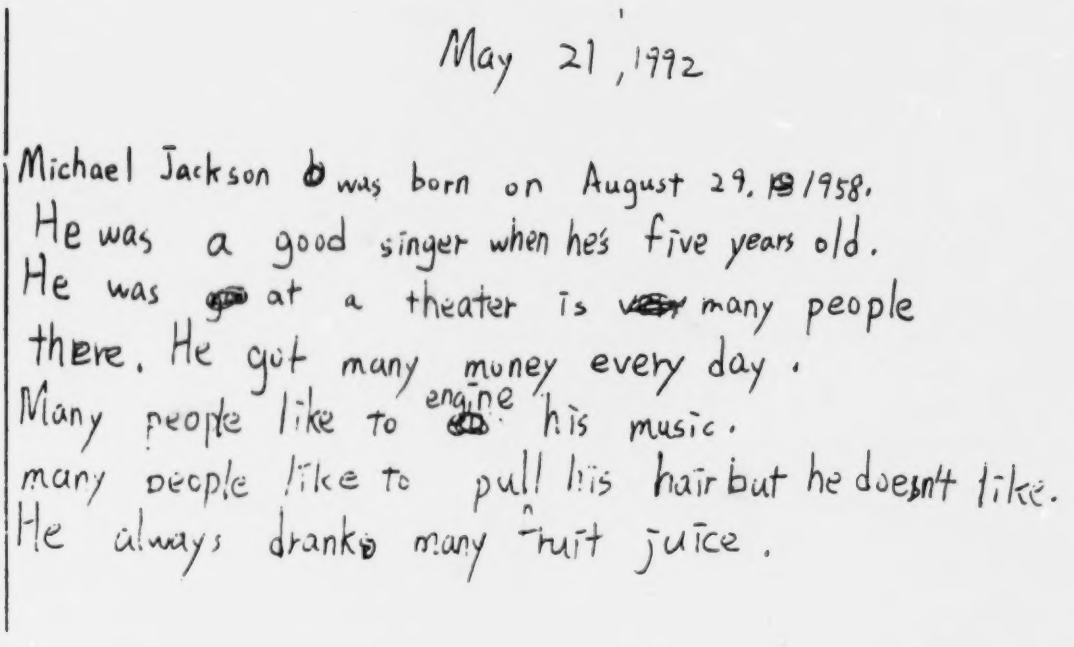
By this time, the telltale problem with transfer from the Chinese existential *you* had been corrected, leading to the proper use of *It has*. Contraction was well learned, while mastery of the noun plural *-s* and indefinite pronoun remained haphazard. His vocabulary had expanded. However, such a list would at most be rated *Novice-High+*, i.e., only a little more advanced than the sample from his First Assessment. Because what he understood to be the writing task did not demand more, Matt simply produced a list with different subject matter than "school." Otherwise, he had kept the list format and the quantity of sentences (five). **But note that this time around, Zou had not said anything about producing up to five sentences, nor did he ask for the list format.** Furthermore, an effect from residual memory of the First Assessment prompt was unlikely, considering that half a year had lapsed between the two occasions.

Note that the corresponding Second Assessment writing samples from the other focal students did not show evidence of attempting to adhere to the list form—not even that by Audrey So or Martin Zhang, both considered to be struggling harder in English than Matt. This effectively casts doubt on one of the assumptions

underlying Mr. Hinton's writing instruction: that the list form is a "naturally simpler" organization suitable for students with low proficiency in English, and that the paragraph form represents "natural progress" based on firmer control over morphology and syntax.

It was not so much the generally weaker ESL learner but the better academic performer, Matt, who adhered to the list form the longest. If Zou's understanding of Matt's personal style in school is accurate, i.e., Matt was a well-trained if somewhat docile and passive student under intense parental pressure to do well in school, it would not be surprising to see the effect of Mr. Hinton's instruction most thoroughly internalized by Matt. In the face of any uncertainty over what was expected of him in a writing task, he would revert to the "safest" one taught in the ELD classroom.

This analysis is more plausible in view of the other writing sample produced by Matt at the Second Assessment, the piece based on the Michael Jackson reading, which shows an incomplete application of this internalized "rule" about listing as well (see Figure 8).



May 21, 1992

Michael Jackson was born on August 29, 1958.
He was a good singer when hes five years old.
He was at a theater is many people
there. He got many money every day.
Many people like to engine his music.
many people like to pull his hair but he doesn't like.
He always drank many fruit juice.

Figure 8. Matt Chang's Michael Jackson piece.

Note that here, too, all but one of the sentences begin at the left margin. *He was at a theater is many people there.* overflows onto the next line, and *He got many money every day.* follows on this second line. However, when Matt came to *many people like to pull his hair but he doesn't like.*, even though this sentence is the longest in the paragraph, all the words were fitted onto one line. It is as if Matt, like Audrey, had "caught himself" and made an effort to return to the list form. With its more complex sentence structures (subordinate clause with *when*; coordinate clause with *but*) and an attempt to move beyond the present tense (in spite of uncertain command of the past tense), this passage would rate *Intermediate-Mid*.

Matt's reading comprehension of the Michael Jackson story was good, and he retold what he learned in his own words. He presented facts about Jackson's life in a sequence different form that in the text (unlike John Sun, who kept the original sequence), which might imply that Matt did minimal consulting of the original. Also, of the four focal students, Matt covered the most material from the chosen story, moving beyond the first paragraph to include facts from the second. His performance here might suggest faster reading speed, greater comprehension, and/or prior experience with this type of academic assignment.

Of the four focal students, Matt gave the shortest answer (in Chinese) when asked to do an introspective report after the writing portion of the Second Assessment: "I have to write very fast and there are a lot of words I don't remember." While writing very fast might be related to having a lot of content to convey, in the larger context of Matt's style of functioning in school, his remark seems to show a concern with good performance.

A Chinese sample produced by Matt on September 24, 1992, not only gives an indication of Matt's Chinese literacy but also provides evidence that he was familiar with a genre of academic writing in Chinese called *dushu xinde* or *xinde* for short, which would have helped him with an assignment like that based on the celebrity biographies (see Figure 9). Of the three focal students who produced Chinese samples at around the same time (a year after their arrival in the U.S.), Matt is the only one who did not make any mistakes in his Chinese. When he switched to English for *Food* class, it was not so much because he had forgotten the Chinese word but because there was no equivalent of such a class in a Taiwan school. As for P.E., Matt's use of the English abbreviation appeared to be an effect of habit, because the rest of the passage indicates that he could remember characters as complex as the ones for the Chinese equivalent of P.E.

More interestingly, when describing his day, he used the Chinese term *xinde* to refer to a writing assignment given by the Sheltered Core teacher in English. *Dushu xinde*, literally "what the heart/mind gets from book-reading," is a kind of writing assignment whose closest equivalent in English is a combination of "reading response" and "book report." A *xinde* can be of varying length; depending on the length, it could be in paragraph or multi-paragraph essay form. It involves the reader's personal response to a piece of reading; both "emotional" and "analytical" responses can be included. While *xinde* can certainly be written by any reader, most commonly it refers to a genre of writing done in school. Matt's familiarity with the term a year after immigration suggests that he had a pretty advanced education in

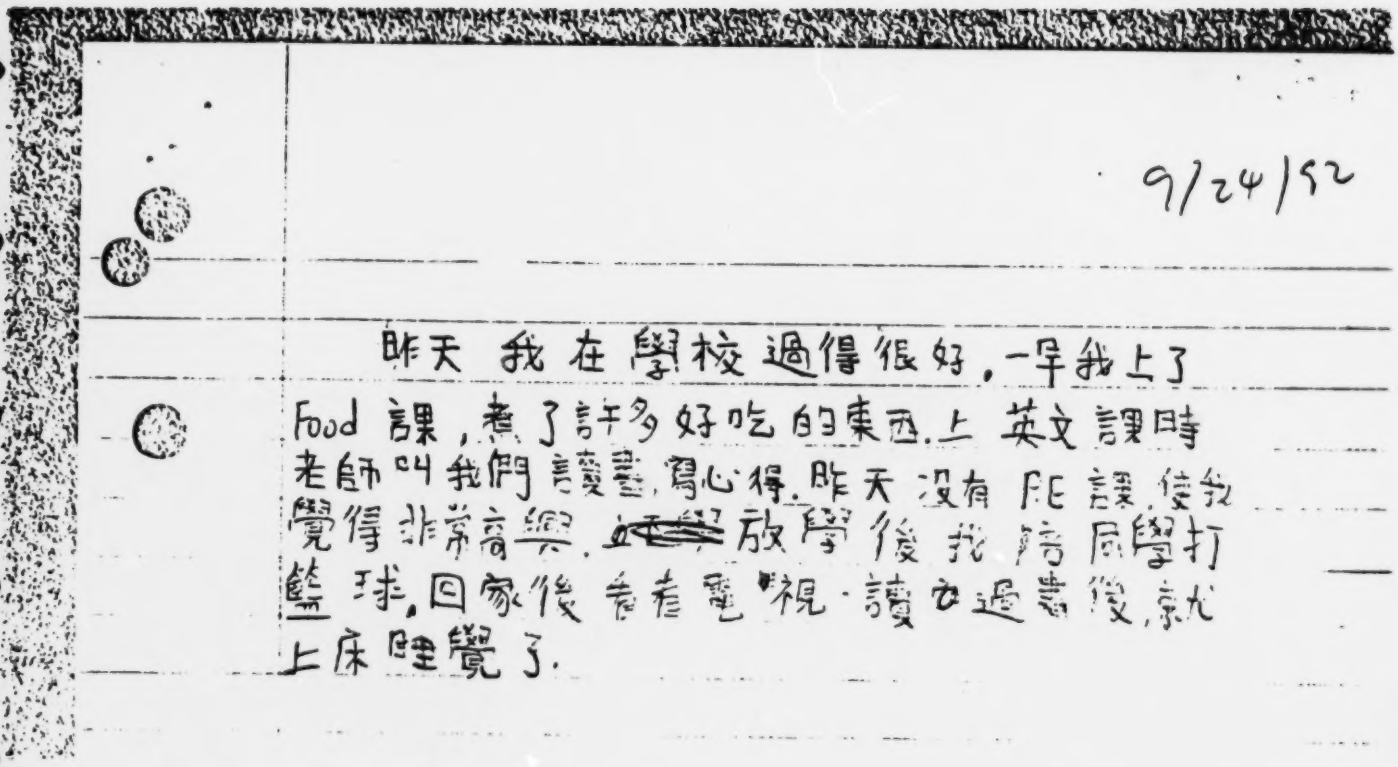


Figure 9. Matt Chang's Chinese writing sample.

[English translation by Wong. The term *xinde* remains untranslated]

Yesterday I had a good day in school. Early in the morning I went to Food class and cooked a lot of delicious food. In English class the teacher told us to read and write *xinde*. Yesterday there was no P.E. class, making me very happy. After school I played basketball with school friends. After I came home I watched some TV. After studying I went to bed.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

literacy in Chinese, and that he perceived enough similarity between the *xinde* genre and "reading response" to find the Chinese term appropriate. Matt's comfort with the term *xinde* indicates that his knowledge of connected discourse in paragraph or essay form, already well learned in Chinese, was not made use of in Mr. Hinton's classroom. In fact, he was encouraged to "regress" to list form.

Certainly this retarding effect was not permanent. When Matt moved to Mrs. Garcia's class, he adapted to her teaching. His handling of the *Dragonwings* booklet assignment, compared to John Sun's, shows a student who seemed to have less on his mind to unload, to have understood the purpose of the assignment, and to have paid greater attention to accuracy of form (see Figure 10). Under "Impressions of America," when Matt added *I think* to *he felt many things were different than China*, he appeared to operate from an understanding of the purpose of this assignment: to give a personal response to the book rather than just a summary of the events in the novel. In other words, the pictures and captions were a kind of *xinde* too. His referencing his passages to specific page of the book fits into our picture of Matt as a student with good academic skills; he tried to move away from details in order to encompass key points of those pages.

The writing sample produced by Matt at the Third Assessment, after he had moved to Huntington School in Lagunita, is noteworthy in that on his own, he produced two unrelated passages, one about his new school, one a book summary (see Figure 11). These passages would rate *Intermediate-High+*. For the "school" passage, the closest approximation on the Gentile scale is *Undeveloped Discussion* for Informative Writing.

Matt had trouble with complex sentence structures like *It's about a girl who had a friend commited suicide* and idioms like *she insisted her grandmother to live with her family*. Run-on sentences are a recurrent problem, especially in the summary where a large number of events of similar import have to be condensed and presented (e.g., *Soon her friend died, she was really sad, she cried*); sentence boundary in such cases is more a matter of punctuation convention than a matter of meaning. Otherwise, he showed a broad vocabulary and a relatively firm command of grammar/mechanics. The fact that Matt crossed out *60* to write *sixty*, edited *the friend* to *her friend*, and corrected *friends* to *friend*, indicates good editing habits. The change from *January* (attempted) to *the head of this year* (a translation from Chinese for "the beginning of this year) is the only case where Matt's editing created a new problem. Unlike John's most advanced sample "Fire," Matt's two passages here are still very much based on an oral style, with no literary flourishes like John's vivid images or exclamations.

The fact that Matt produced a book summary without having been prompted in any way suggests that the academic purpose of writing had been deeply internalized by him. It is easy to see, from his readiness to produce according to the expectations of the school setting and his neat penmanship, how Matt could be judged a more successful learner of English, even though John Sun was a more colorful writer with a keener mind in some ways. Indeed, Matt was a "good student." His strength in academic writing and study habits overshadowed his shakiness in listening comprehension and speaking.

Figure 10. Matt Chang's *Dragonwings* booklet (on the following three pages).

Dragonwings

Impressions of America P.8-14

Moon Shadow was frightened, he didn't know how to speak demon's language. I think he felt many things were different than China.

New Setting #3. P.15-20.

Moon Shadow knew things after he visited the street. Such as: brothels, saloons and gambling.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

p. 1-1

Charater / Setting

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 11. Matt Chang's Third Assessment sample (on the following page).

I started a new school in [redacted] the head of this year. It's a very big school, it has more tha[redacted] sixty classrooms. In school the teachers are nice, a[redacted] they are easy to talk to. My friends are nice and funny, we play basketball together. The school starts at 8:15 an[redacted] ends at 2:50, on Thursday we go to school later and end[redacted] school earlier. We have an advisory time every Thursda[redacted] we can play games if the teacher says so. We have a TEAM tim[redacted] everyday, it's for the students who have questions for teac[redacted] I take Problem Solving, Food, P.E., Math, Science, English, a[redacted] Social Study in school. I [redacted] like math most. I like th[redacted] s[redacted]ool!

I have read a book named Close to the Edge lately. It's a good [redacted] book, but it makes people feel sad. It's about a girl who had a friend commited suicide. The girl's name Jeny. Jeny helped her, and they became good friends again. [redacted] And then Jeny joined a alub, she learned many things about old people in the club. Soon [redacted] her friends died, she was really sad, she cried. After the death of her friend, she insisted her grandm[redacted] to live with her family.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Martin Zhang: A Profile

Martin Zhang, the only focal student from the Chinese mainland, had two years of English in Shanghai prior to immigration. He took the First Assessment November 12, 1991; the Second, May 19, 1992. He dropped out of Cooperville Junior High after one year. Because the data on him is so limited, the discussion will focus on the possible effect of the following factors on his language development: his pre-immigration literacy experiences in Chinese and English; the writing instruction he received in the ELD class; and the stresses in his family and school life.

Development of Listening and Speaking

Martin began as a *Novice-Low* in listening and speaking. 49 of the 72 turns were in Chinese. Surprisingly, when these turns are examined, it can be seen that the overwhelming majority of them were made by Zou when Martin failed to understand, except for a series of turns at the very end when both interlocutor and subject appeared totally exhausted. Even though Martin's English was so shaky at this point—he couldn't even understand formulaic questions like *Where do you live?* and *Where were you born?*—there was an astonishing tenacity about him: he seemed determined to stay in the conversation in English, despite great frustration and moments of embarrassment. Of the four focal students, he was the one who produced the longest response when asked to "say something in English:

> Yes . . . mm . . . goo . . . good morning . . . mm . . . what's your name . . . mm what's your father . . . mm . . . what's your pu . . . mm
> [Then, in response to Zou's puzzlement:]
> er . . . no . . . what's your father name . . . what's your father and mother name . . . I am in . . . I am in Cooperville Junior High School . . . er . . . my father . . . mm . . . and mother, we . . . oh my father and my father . . . it's er studying me, it's telling me English . . . mm . . . my . . . and talk to friend, I know very much . . . s . . . English . . .

Even the transcript is painful to read: one could see Martin sweating to produce as much English as he could. His ambitiousness and determination were really quite remarkable.

It seemed to be Martin's lack of English proficiency, not lack of ideas, that limited his answers. In the following exchange, when given a question specifying multiple answers, Martin Zhang came up with them quickly, but had to drop an item from lacking the vocabulary to talk about it:

> Zou: [Clarifying Martin's earlier misunderstandings of his question in English] (C) Tell me five features of the car [Martin's family car], like its color, size, speed . . .
> MZ: (E) OK. The car . . . er . . . the car's color . . . er . . . is gray . . . it . . . it is very fast . . . it's very clean . . . mm . . . the window is bright, uh uh, very bright.
> Zou: (E) It's four. Five. The fifth thing?
> MZ: (E) OK. The radio . . . oh . . . the lamp was very bright.

By the Second Assessment, Martin can be considered to have reached *Novice-High*. He understood most of Zou's questions, and only 6 out of the 96 turns were in Chinese. His listening comprehension was still haphazard, however. For example, he still had trouble with *Where were you born?* In answer to *When does school start?*, he said *It's junior high*. In answer to *How many classes do you have?*, he said *Twenty-six*, which was actually the number of Mr. Hinton's classroom. He continued to hazard phrases in English that were barely comprehensible. When asked about the movies he liked, he said, *I can't call the name, because I watch, looked the movie the few time*. On the academic portion of the listening comprehension assessment, he missed all three questions after listening to Zou's lecture on Hawaii. However, as usual, he was a bold guesser. When asked about why people go to Hawaii, he said *Because that is for the summer*—certainly a reasonable guess about most resorts except for Hawaii, which is as popular in winter than in summer if not more so.

Development of Reading

When given the First Assessment reading from the magazine, Martin understood hardly anything. At most he would be rated *Novice-Low*. But he ventured a wild guess based on minimal clues. The news item from *News for Kids* reads:

> **CHINA TO SIGN NUCLEAR PACT**
>
> The Chinese government announced that it had decided, in principal, to sign the treaty. This will help rebuild relations between the United States and China.

When asked by Zou in Chinese to "find something in the article or the book [magazine] that you can explain to me," Martin described the item in Chinese as an account of the recent flood in eastern China and how the Chinese government gave help to the flood victims. This was probably based simply on recognizing the word *China*. When Zou asked him about *the United States* in the story, Martin didn't even recognize the name.

At the Second Assessment, judging from his response to the Pele story, Martin's reading comprehension was *Intermediate-Low*. However, signs of guessing are still present. His passage on Pele, which contains details of the first paragraph but incorporated one fact from the third, concludes with the sentence, *Then he was hard study play football, so he is a good football player*. Nothing in the original story talks about the "hard study" that Pele put in to improve his football playing. The moral of "hard work leads to success" seems to reflect Martin's familiarity with a type of inspirational/didactic Chinese stories frequently told to children to teach perseverance. One famous story concerns the poet Li Bai (Li Po), who as a youngster was inspired to work hard on his poetry when he saw an old woman patiently grinding down an iron rod to make a needle. Another tells of the famous

calligraphy Wang Xizhi, who used up a huge urn of water (for grinding ink) in order to perfect his calligraphy.

These Chinese stories are, in a sense, also "celebrity biographies," but with a very culture-specific structure placing a clearly stated moral at the end. The "celebrity biographies" given as readings for the Second Assessment are inspirational only in a very general sense; the fame of the celebrity may or may not have been the result of hard work, though talent is an essential ingredient. Martin Zhang, drawing upon his Chinese literacy, must have "filled in" the "missing moral" when he felt he needed to conclude his summary. In his own way, and on the global rhetorical level rather than sentence/word level, Martin actually demonstrates the kind of educated guessing that psycholinguists have identified as a characteristic of the good reader.

Apart from personal factors observed by Zou (such as parental pressure and the need to prove himself), Martin's propensity for guessing in listening and reading comprehension might be attributed to the type of schooling he had prior to immigration. According to Zou, who grew up in Shanghai and had first-hand experience with the Chinese educational system, important examinations in Chinese schools sometimes include a number of "trick" questions designed to stretch their minds and test their imagination. To survive such exams, students must learn to make bold guesses.

Development of Writing

Though Martin dropped out of the study and produced few writing samples, they raise tantalizing questions.

At the First Assessment, Martin produced a multi-paragraph essay. To the extent that the essay contains "recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences on very familiar topics," it would rate an *Intermediate-Low* according to the *ACTFL Guidelines*. But its rhetorical structure is actually highly developed. Even the *Advanced* category only describes "a sense of organization [rhetorical structure] . . . emerging," yet Martin's sense of organization appears is "emerging"—it is already well-learned.

My School

I'm in the Cooperville Juny Hi School. It's a big school. There are many students and many teachers in this school. There are many clean classroom in this school.

This School is biger than my old school in Shang Hai. This air very fresh. There're many tree besid school, so I can study well in this school. I can play any ball the big play top after school.

I have many good teachers, they are very patient. I'm very happy in this school, I can stund many things.

Several things are remarkable about this sample. First, it was produced at a time when Martin could barely read a simplified news story in English or carry on a conversation in English made up of mostly formulaic exchanges. His English speech at this point was described by Zou as a melange of barely comprehensible syntax and recognizable vocabulary, but such a combination is not found in this writing sample. In fact, it is the most advanced of the samples produced at the First Assessment, though Martin's listening and speaking were the most laborious if not weakest among the focal students. Thus writing proficiency was clearly separate from other skills. This could be a result of his previous English training in China, where English is taught as a foreign language or "book language' and where native English-speaking teachers are few and far between.

Secondly, while Zou mentioned "up to five sentences" in his prompt as a way of easing the focal students' puzzlement over his expectations, he did not prohibit longer pieces. But as mentioned before, John Sun, Matt Chang, and Samuel Feng produced lists, while Audrey So produced a connected paragraph with numbering of the sentences apparently added as an afterthought. Only Martin Zhang had the "originality" to decide to write a multi-paragraph essay. Only he took advantage of the non-specific prompt to not only create a sustained, coherent piece of writing in essay form, but also to focus at length on his emotional reactions to his new environment. In terms of discourse structure, he already knew paragraph division and development; he also moved from general to specific, from "global" statements about the school in the first paragraph to a comparison of his Shanghai school and American school in the second paragraph, then to a discussion of his education in the new school. He knew how to used coordination. In terms of cognitive functions, he showed himself capable of comparing and contrasting. (That these sentiments represented his true reactions rather than polite clichés was revealed by a conversation Zou had with him in Shanghainese two weeks before, in which he expressed enjoyment of the material advantages of his new life: more space at home and at school, open space for play, and heating in the winter.) In terms of morphology and syntax, Martin had some sense of the noun plural *-s* ending (*teachers; students; things*), though control was still uncertain. His ability to use *There are* correctly marks him as more advanced than the other focal students who had trouble with the Chinese existential *you*.

Note, however, that Martin's First Assessment essay **would have been impossible in Mr. Hinton's class**: the teacher's insistence on uniformity would have provided no opportunity for him to employ and display **skills that he already knew**. In fact, Mr. Hinton's low expectations of newcomer students and the type of writing tasks he assigned must have forced Martin to "regress" in his school assignments to a simpler discourse: a discourse to which "real life" was deemed irrelevant if not distracting, and which consisted of a collection of structurally prescribed sentences. Not following instructions was considered a more serious problem than not having something to say.

Furthermore, differential development between the four skills was not a possibility addressed in Mr. Hinton's insistence on the "listening, speaking, reading, writing' sequence and on rigid control over input and output. Nor could it be accommodated by a "deficit" model of ESL learning whereby lack of English

proficiency was implicitly or explicitly equated with a more general lack in intellectual capability. Martin Zhang's proficiency in listening, speaking, and reading were considerably below his proficiency in non-controlled writing, an area in which he was freer to express his own ideas while still operating within the constraints of limited vocabulary and sentence structure. He was relieved from the immediate pressure of face-to-face communication and from being confronted with preformed reading material. But his considerable literacy skills in Chinese and his comparative strength in writing were not recognized as relevant assets in Mr. Hinton's classroom. Neither the instructor nor the Mandarin-speaking aide perceived him as an intelligent, thoughtful, ambitious youngster with a lot to say.

It was also highly possible that Martin Zhang was reacting to the frustrations of finding his literacy skills in Chinese judged irrelevant, his writing skills in English forced into the Procrustean bed of controlled, decontextualized exercises, and his general opportunities for self-expression drastically curtailed.

By the time of the Second Assessment, as noted in the account of his general situation, Martin had long been labeled as a low-achieving trouble-maker and had become very demoralized. The passages he produced, one on Pele and one on his family, are longer than the First Assessment essay and attempt to use the past tense and verbs other than the verb-to-be. (The use of *be* with an action verb, showing transfer from Chinese, is a recurrent error.) However, gone is the essay form, and the passages overall give a greater expression of struggle and lack of control over morphology and syntax. They fit the *Intermediate-Mid* designation in some ways, but in others represent a **deterioration** of writing skills.

Pele is a football player. He was born on October, 1940. He was leav in a poor family. Pele like play foot ball but there was not mony ~~by~~ buy a football, so his father was do a ball use some rages. When he 16 years old ~~He~~ he was j in a team play the foot ball in the New York. Then he was hard ~~sd~~ study play football, so he is a good football player.

I have a chines family. My father and mother is speak chines. I'm in the Cooperville J.H. study english. My fathe — work in the story. My — is a home people. My family is not so poor and not so rich. I very love my family. My mother can speak some english, so after school she is teach me read some english book. ~~Usa~~ Some time I was watch some TV.

[— designates illegible cross-outs]

As for the introspective report, of the four focal students, he gave the longest reply. The translation of his remarks on the writing tasks is as follows:

> I was thinking the content of what I was writing should be detailed. And as my English is still not very good, I had to use simple sentences to express what I meant.
>
> I wrote fast and I did not write well. I only hope that when I can write better, I will be able to write better essays in English. The sentences and patterns I learned in China are definitely not enough. So I have to learn the American language well.
>
> I was a little nervous.
>
> Since usually what we get is always homework assignments, this time I don't know the purpose of the writing assignment and what is going to happen if I do well and what will be the result if I don't do well.
>
> I wanted to make my handwriting look better. But since I started practicing only recently, the letters are not so well formed.

Interestingly, even after almost a year in Mr. Hinton's class, Martin still emphasized content and purpose in writing.

While Martin's scholastic "failure" is attributable to a host of factors, some of which were unrelated to school (e.g., stress resulting from the family's economic and visa problems), it must be acknowledged that the writing instruction in Mr. Hinton's classroom must have added to the general frustration Martin was experiencing. The mechanical exercises did little to tap into and develop literacy skills he already had upon immigration (in Chinese *and* in English); content, which was a key concern for him and John Sun in their introspective reports, was all but ignored.

Audrey So: A Profile

Audrey So came to the U.S. in July 1991, after finishing primary school in Taiwan and attending "night school" to learn English before immigration. She took the First Language Assessment November 14, 1991; the Second, May 18, 1992; the Third, February 22, 1993.

Development of Listening and Speaking

Audrey tested at *Novice-Mid* for both listening and speaking at the First Assessment. Twenty-five of the 100 turns were conducted in Chinese. Audrey had trouble understanding formulae like *Where were you born?* and *What's your age?*, but struggled much less than Martin Zhang to get her ideas across. Unlike Martin, who persisted in using English despite great difficulty, she switched from English to Chinese mid-sentence a couple of times, e.g., when asked about her weekend activities, she said in English, *church*, then added in Chinese, "play ball games at home." When asked to describe her family car, she said, *My father have two cars. One is a van and is cherry-colored. And is very bi. The second car is*—then switching to Chinese—"a wagon, I don't know how to say it."

By the Second Assessment, Audrey had reached *Novice-High* level, with only 11 turns out of 107 conducted in Chinese (of which four concerned role-play instructions). Again, she showed the pattern of switching back and forth between English and Chinese in the middle of a response. Of the focal students, she was the only one showing this tendency. For example:

> [English] Er, we can talk to friends and can, can see [Chinese] we can sing in [English] class.
>
> [English] I like drawing [Chinese] that is, make some artistic things.
>
> [English] Weekend, er, wash clothes [Chinese] that is, go to the laundry [English] and study.

On the academic lecture portion, Audrey missed one out of three questions on Hawaii.

By the Third Assessment, all the turns were conducted in English, and Audrey's level would be about *Intermediate-Mid* if not higher. The Assessment itself was limited to routine questions and would not be able to capture more advanced developments, but Audrey had obviously gone beyond formulaic answers. For example, when asked to name some things she could say in English, she said *There are many things, I can't remember all of them*. Most of her answers were in complete sentences; the verb-to-be was not omitted, and use of the definite and indefinite articles was usually correct.

Development of Reading

At the First Assessment, Audrey could not read any item in *News for Kids* and was most likely at the *Novice-Low* level. At the Second Assessment, her Pele composition showed generally good comprehension; her reading level was probably *Intermediate-Low+*. At the Third Assessment, she understood most of the Massasoit reading, missing one out of the three comprehension questions. The one she missed concerned Massasoit's son, "who was called 'King Philip' by the English." Audrey understood it to mean "King Philip was English." This suggested that based on understanding discrete words, she tried to guess the connection between them. Her reading level was probably a little below *Intermediate-Mid*.

Development of Writing

Based on her writing samples at the three Assessments, Audrey So progressed from *Novice-High-* to *Intermediate-Low* to *Intermediate-Low+*. However, because of her later demoralization and noncooperation, her Third Assessment piece might not be representative of the best she was capable of. In the portfolio that Mrs. Fielding asked Audrey to turn over to Zou, there were pieces that looked more advanced and would place her at *Intermediate-Mid*. Note, however, that the material in the portfolio was most likely pre-screened by Mrs. Fielding. Based on Zou's sense of her general standing in the class, she was not getting as high a percentage of good grades as the portfolio would indicate.

Audrey's First Assessment piece on school, reproduced above in the section on Matt Chang, was the only sample from the focal students that used Chinese characters to stand in for English words about which the student was unsure. Thus *s t* was given after the Chinese phrase for "students"; *f* preceded the Chinese phrase for "friends" in two instances. The other Chinese character was for "words," so that the third sentence most likely meant "The teacher taught me many, many words." Though Audrey could use the existential *have* as well as the possessive *have* and had basic command of the subject-verb-object/subject-verb-to-be-predicate word order, she had considerable trouble at the word level, e.g., repeatedly writing *school* as *shool*, *teacher* as *teater*. *Talk* was written as *tlock*, *taught* as *tooked*. Her sense of sound-symbol correspondence appeared very weak. *In the shool can play and tlock to f* . showed transfer from Chinese in the omission of the subject.

At the Second Assessment, Audrey produced the following in response to the "celebrity biography" reading on Pele:

Pele was a soccer ball player.
He born in Oct. 23, 1940.
In his town, they are very poor.
They can not buy a soccer ball.
So Pele's mother ~~mal~~ made a
soccer ball from rags.

As with Matt's piece on Michael Jackson, the spacing in Audrey's piece could be interpreted as showing an attempt to stay within the list format taught in Mr. Hinton's class. The second sentence is considerably shorter than the others, with *1940* placed under *ball* in first line, but Audrey started *In his town* on a new line rather than use the space after *1940*. Only the last sentence did not fit into one line. This might be a sign that Audrey tried her best to use the list format in the light of uncertainty about the nature of this writing task, which was school-related but not part of the regular work. Possibly her sense of the academic nature of this task was reinforced by the reading passage, which gave it the air of a test. In contrast, on the "free" composition portion of the Assessment, she used the paragraph form in an unequivocal way. Audrey used the abbreviation *Oct. 23, 1940* for the date of birth of the protagonist—the form which Mr. Hinton had trained his class to use to achieve uniform format—whereas the other focal students did not do so. Again, this might be a sign of "hedging" to stay within the norms of correctness required by Mr. Hinton.

Audrey's control of the past tense was uncertain. The omission of the verb-to-be before *born* is most likely a sign of transfer from Chinese; indeed, *born* appears to have given trouble to all of the focal students at one point or another, either in listening comprehension, speaking, or writing.

Audrey's "free" composition at the Second Assessment is an undeveloped narrative that could be labeled *Event Description* using the Gentile scale:

I got home I took out some
cookies and apple juice. Then I

do my homework and play computer.
I play ~~bask~~ ~~basek~~ basketball and
jumprowd with my brouther. At
night I study the English.

On the Third Assessment, although Audrey did Informative as opposed to Narrative writing, and although output was considerably higher, the sample still had an undeveloped feel to it.

I have a family. I have a father, ~~and~~
mother, and a brother. My father is a pastor,
he work at church. My mom is a house
wife, she is very nice and friendly, she like
to cook. My brother is a student, he
love to play ball, ~~bu my mom~~ he can play
anykinds of ball. I have a grandmother
she is 70 years-old, she live in Taiwan
she is very kind, and storong. And she love
to sing and playing piano. I ~~have~~ have
a uncle, he is a doctor, he is 33
years-old, ~~she~~ he just married for 1 year.

If Zou's picture of Audrey So as being unmotivated to achieve in school is accurate, the relatively slow progress she made in English writing between the first and second years tends to confirm the impression. Certainly her increased mood swings during the second year, her strained relationship with Zou, and the lack of challenge in the Language Assessments added to her unwillingness to produce.

But Audrey's writing development should also be placed in the context of the type of instruction she received in Mrs. Fielding's class. As described above, Mrs. Fielding did a mixture of Hinton-type drills and process- and meaning-oriented writing. Her journal assignment gave students a chance to choose and write on topics without anxiety about correctness, and Reading Response assignments encouraged students to articulate their subjective reactions. Some of Audrey's writing produced for such assignments showed more details, perhaps because she was encouraged to use her "voice." The following pieces, produced on November 12, 1992 and December 1, 1992 respectively:

My Goals for Second Quarter
In the first quarter, I did a
good job, but not very good, it's B. So
my goals is getting a good grade, B+ or
A-, and maybe I'm going to a context,
so I hope I'm going to get 1st place.
In the church I'm a keyboard player, I hope
I can play better then better.

Readng Responses

I love this story, it is very exciting. I like Reinsford, he is a smart brave, clever man. When the man want to killed him, I was very tense, I throgh Reinsfored is going to died, but he did not. I like this story very much, I hope I can read it again.

As in the case of John Sun, the opportunity to choose a topic of interest to the student seemed to make a difference in Audrey's writing. The longest and most well-developed composition in her portfolio is the multi-paragraph essay on Chinese New Year attached below (Figure 12). The Chinese characters on the second page portray the type of New Year decoration described in the last paragraph of her essay and represent the most imaginative "touch" seen in her portfolio.

While the "Chinese New Year" essay suggests the positive effect of motivation and familiarity of subject matter on the level of development of a piece of Narrative and/or Informative writing, the question remains as to when and how to address Audrey's problems with morphology and syntax, some of which showed little improvement from the first to the second year. Among these are run-on sentences and uncertain command of past tense verbs, which appeared well on the way to fossilization. Exposure to a variety of process- and meaning-oriented writing tasks was on its own insufficient to reverse fossilization and improve Audrey's control of morphology and syntax. Moreover, the more mechanical types of writing done in sheltered History as part of Sheltered Core, such as copying definitions from the glossary, copying questions, matching lists, and providing short answers were less demanding, and Audrey did considerably better on them than on writing tasks that depending on her own wording.

Figure 12. Audrey So's "Chinese New Year" piece (on the following two pages).

1993.1.24

Per. 12

Chinese New Year

The Chinese New Year is very different from any countries. It is so exciting for me.

I love the new year because I can eat many kinds of food. Last Friday night, my family and some friends got together on the eve of the lunar new year. We ate some glutinous rice cake, it tast so good. And we ate Chafen, and sausage, it is made of pig.

After the dinner my mom's friend gave me a red paper bag, I'm so excited, and I know there are many money but I don't know how much money are there, but I can't open it, because it is a Chines tradition, so I didn't open. But my brother keep asked me, "How much money did you get." I said I don't know," but many adult told me to open it so I opened, when I looked

I'm sad because I got 10 doller only, at that time I'm going to cried but I just keep smiled and said thank-you. After that my fathe gave me a red paper bag. I'm so exciting because last year my father gave me 80 dollers, so I know that will give me much more than 80 doller. when I opened it, it was 10 doller, I was so mad, so I call mamma to my father, he said "Last year I gave you too much money and you spend to much, so this time I gave you 10 doller."

When I think about Taiwan's new year, everyone wear new clothes, and no school for 3 weeks or 4 weeks, and everyone's door has some red paper, and it had litter in it.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

At the same time that Audrey's English writing was improving slowly, with some signs of plateauing, her written Chinese was showing noticeable deterioration. Of the three focal students who produced Chinese samples, she was not the only one to make mistakes in the characters, but she was the only one to resort to the phonetic symbols used to teach Chinese literacy in Taiwan—commonly called the *bopomofo* system—to substitute for characters whose strokes she couldn't remember. The following passage was produced in October 1992 (Figure 13):

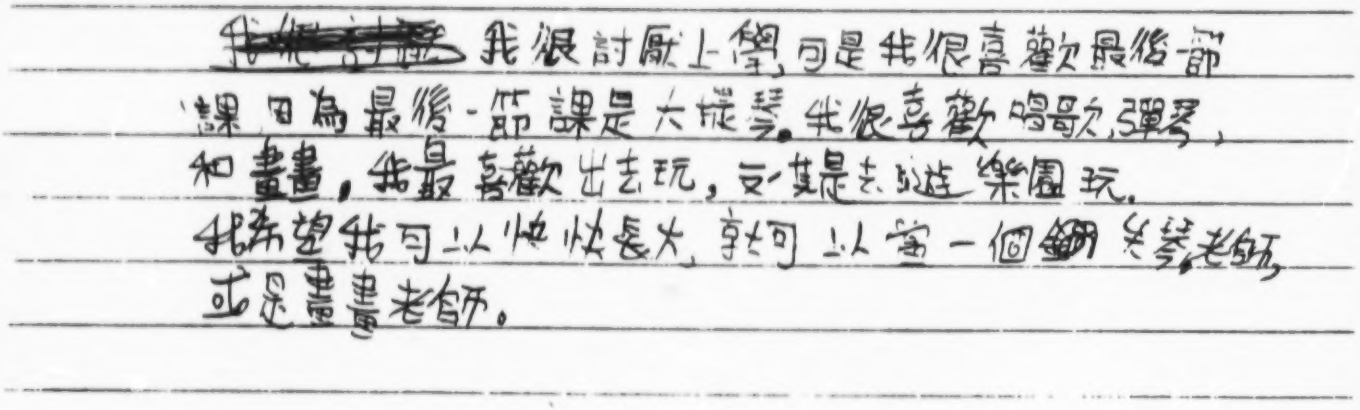


Figure 13. Audrey So's Chinese passage, "I hate to go to school"

[English translation by Wong]

> [The first Chinese phrase for *I hate a lot* was crossed out.] **I hate going to school a lot, but I like the last period a lot, because the last period is cello. I like singing, playing music, and drawing pictures a lot. I like going out to play most, *especially* at the amusement park. I hope I can grow up quickly, so that I can be a *piano* teacher or an art teacher.** [The Chinese originals for the underlined words were partly rendered in *bopomofo* phonetic symbols.]

The tendency to substitute phonetic symbols was even more noticeable when Audrey was asked to write something in Chinese on March 16, 1993 (see Figure 14).

The diction of the "music test" passage below shows a mixture of slang (*kaode henlan*, "did terribly on the test") and literary diction (the Chinese original for "careless," *cuxin dayi*, is a four-character "set phrase" marking a written as opposed to vernacular style). Compared to John Sun's or Matt Chang's, Audrey's Chinese sample showed much less meticulousness about accuracy and stylistic consistency. The passage was produced reluctantly in a tense situation, and the repetition of "I don't know" could be Audrey's means of venting her frustration at being requested to perform. Incidentally, the repetition of "I don't know" might be circumstantial evidence that Mrs. Fielding had given her class "free writing," a type of exercise to promote fluency in which students are instructed to write without pausing or revising and are allowed to say "I don't know" when they can't think of the next word. As far as Wong knows, it is unheard of in conventional Chinese writing classes for students to write and repeat "I don't know."

Apart from showing rapid erosion of Chinese literacy, Audrey's use of phonetic symbols might be related to her tendency during the first two Assessments to switch between Chinese and English mid-sentence, and her use of Chinese characters in the writing sample for the First Assessment. Code-switching appeared to be her favored production strategy regardless of the language and mode used.

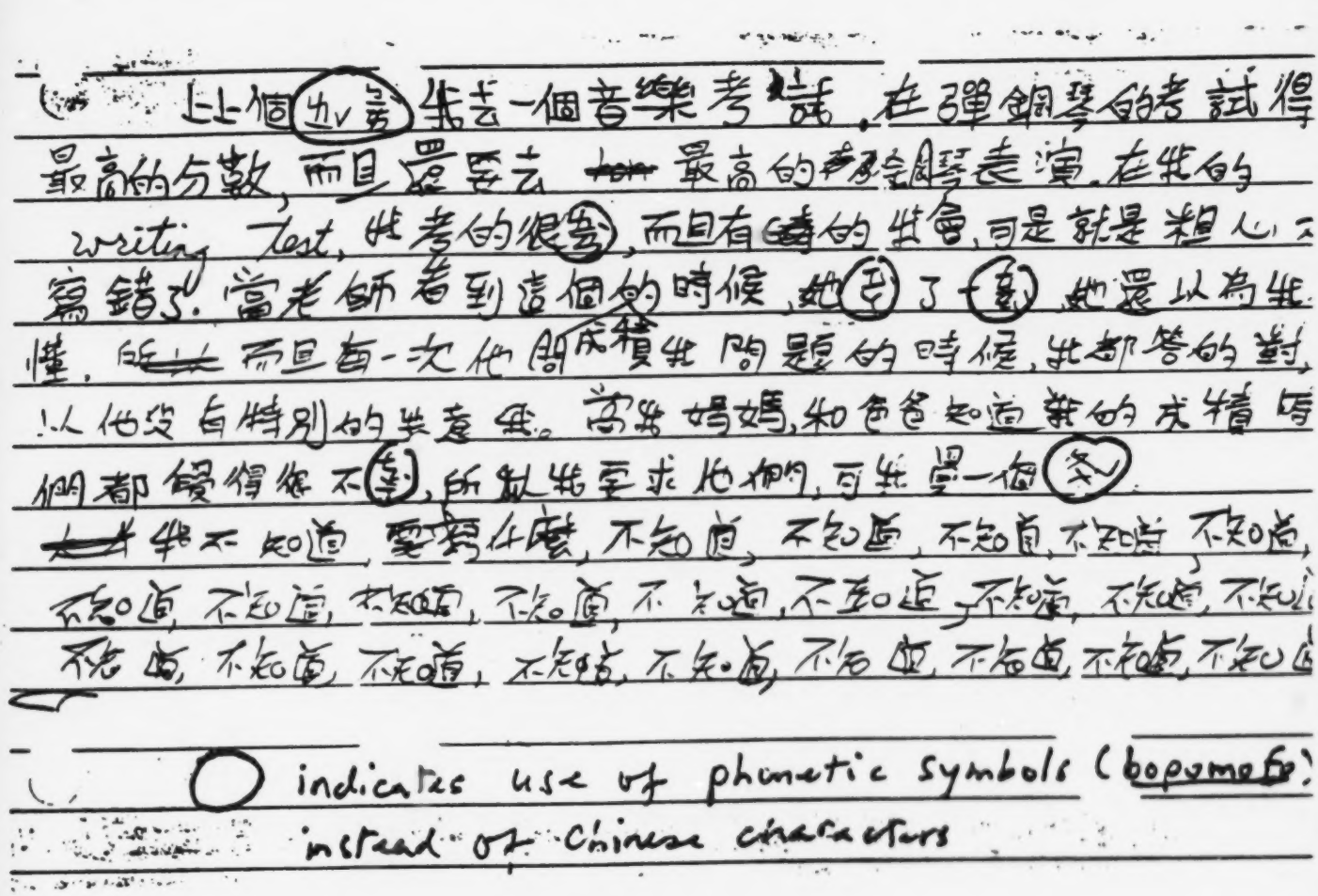


Figure 14. Audrey So's Chinese passage, "Music Test."

[English translation by Wong]

> **Last last** [Chinese character repeated] ***week*** **I went to a music test. I got the highest score on piano-playing; moreover, I will go to a recital at the highest level. On my writing test, I did *terribly*; moreover, I knew some of the answers, but I was just careless and wrote them wrong. When the teacher saw the results, she was *shocked*. She thought I knew it all. Moreover, every time he [sic in Chinese] asked me questions, I answered correctly, so he [sic in Chinese] didn't pay particular attention to me. When my mother and father found out my results** [judging from the context, Audrey must be referring to the music test], **they felt it was not *bad*, so I asked them to buy a *notebook* for me.**
>
> **I don't know what to write, I don't know** [repeated 22 more times]. [The Chinese originals for the underlined phrases were rendered partly or wholly in *bopomofo* phonetic symbols.]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Summary of Focal Students' Language Development Using *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*

	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
John Sun			
1st Lang. Assessment	Nov-High	Nov-Low	Nov-Mid+
2nd Lang. Assessment	Int-Mid+	Int-Mid	Int-Mid+
3rd Lang. Assessment	Int-High	Int-High+	Int-Mid+
4/93			Int-Mid+
5/93			Adv
Matt Chang			
Enrollment		Nov-Low-	Nov-Low
1st Lang. Assessment	Nov-Low	Nov-Low	Nov-High
2nd Lang. Assessment	Int-Low	Int-Mid	Int-High+
3rd Lang. Assessment	Int-Low	Int-High	Int-High+
Martin Zhang			
1st Lang. Assessment	Nov-Low	Nov-Low	Int-Low (but at least Int-Mid organization)
2nd Lang. Assessment	Nov-High	Int-Low	Int-Mid
Audrey So			
1st Lang. Assessment	Nov-Mid	Nov-Low	Nov-High-
2nd Lang. Assessment	Nov-High	Int-Low+	Int-Low
3rd Lang. Assessment	Int-Mid	Int-Mid	Int-Low+

Nov = Novice
Int = Intermediate
Adv = Advanced

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

(1) The group on which this study focuses, 12- to 14-year-old Chinese immigrant students in the 7th and 8th grade, encounter problems in adjustment and language learning that are shared with immigrant students of other age brackets, but also face challenges peculiar to their own age bracket. Their school environment is highly complex, as is their psychosocial development during early adolescence under circumstances of abrupt cultural change. For these youngsters on the verge of adulthood, identity negotiations, needed to establish a sense of competence and security, may be so urgent as to affect their efforts to learn English. A student's performance in ESL must therefore be understood in this larger context of multiple stresses, although individual motivation or industry, or "technical" concerns with program design and pedagogical method, are certainly just as relevant. Our ethnographic observations have identified a wide range of challenges facing some or all of the focal students; these include:

—new economic situation for the family due to immigration (including downward occupational mobility)
—reconfiguration of family relations due to immigration (e.g., changes in the mother's role from career woman to homemaker)
—visa problems in some cases, adding to the instability of the home environment
—parental pressure to perform academically, in response to Chinese cultural imperatives, the "model minority" image for Asian Americans, and a felt need to "justify" the sacrifices entailed by immigration
—stigma of the ESL program, leading to increased parental pressure to enter "regular English" as quickly as possible
—a new educational system different in bureaucratic structure, academic material and standards, and expectations on student behavior
—a racially/ethnically diverse student population, compared to homogeneous ones in Taiwan or on the Chinese mainland
—pressure from teachers subscribing to the "model minority" idea for Chinese students
—a complex "classroom culture" with fluctuating relationships between teacher, aide, and students
—prejudice based on dialect and cultural stereotypes on the part of the Chinese aide, an influential intermediary in the classroom
—an often unspoken association of overall self-worth with English proficiency and overall Westernization
—a Chinese student community made up of peers from different regional, dialectal, and socioeconomic backgrounds with mutual stereotypes
—the need to both obtain support from this community and to establish one's uniqueness, e.g., by presenting oneself as more "authentically Chinese"
—rapid physical development in pubescence and accompanying emotional changes, including interest in sexuality

—a diminishment of self-expression because one's pre-immigration knowledge and competencies in life and in school are not acknowledged, and because one's English skills are not adequate to reflect them
—a perceived punitive overemphasis on mechanical correctness at the expense of content, further inhibiting self-expression
—simplified, non-meaningful material (at the entry level) out of sync with the youngsters' maturity and failing to acknowledge their previous literacy and school experiences

(2) Because of the demographic characteristics of contemporary Chinese immigration to the San Francisco Bay Area, most entering students at this level can be assumed to have had considerably literacy experiences in Chinese, sometimes also in English. Some of the literacy experiences in Chinese are highly relevant to the literacy tasks facing the immigrant students. These range from similar paragraph and punctuation conventions (Chinese borrowed Western features as part of language reforms during the early 20th century) and similar academic writing tasks (such as reading responses and book reports). The literacy skills that the Chinese newcomers brought with them could be considerably more advanced than is generally recognized.

Cooperville's new placement system, which provides a Mandarin-speaking aide to assess native-language proficiency after a newcomer is tested in English, appears a step in the direction of recognizing native-language literacy experiences as relevant to English language development. However, it is not clear yet whether more would be done to incorporate them in instruction, or to take advantage of them in some other fashion.

(3) A striking characteristic of the English language development of the four focal students is that it proceeded very unevenly in the four skills, and also in everyday and academic areas. For example, Martin Zhang came in with the highest proficiency in English writing at a time when he could barely carry on a formulaic conversation in English, and continued to do better in writing than in listening/speaking. Matt Chang made impressive advances in written academic English but remained shaky in everyday listening comprehension even after two years. John Sun learned spoken English fast and well and wrote sophisticated personal narratives, but remained weak in morphological and syntactic accuracy, which is highly prized in academic writing.

This finding strongly contradicts the "commonsensical" but unfortunately widespread notion (even among educators like Mr. Hinton) that English development proceeds in a listening-speaking-reading-writing sequence, and that students who don't speak English well are not ready to tackle writing.

(4) Within writing development itself: again contradicting "commonsensical" notions that "poor English" implies some kind of cognitive deficiency, it is found that the focal students' products show that considerable problems with English morphology and syntax can coexist with highly developed organization, organization, and cognitive skills. Whether the latter group of skills is a result of prior literacy experiences in Chinese or English, or else of some other factor such as cognitive maturation, the fact remains that such a pattern of differential

development must be acknowledged by the teachers and by developers of assessment instruments. (The *ACTFL Cuidelines*, we recall, tend to lump together word- and sentence-level problems with incoherent ideas or lack of conscious organization in a piece of writing.) Otherwise, not only would an important characteristic of the writing fail to be captured, but students might be misplaced and student motivation might suffer considerably when a global grade based on "grammar" seems to cast aspersions on one's developed discourse-level skills. (Some of the focal students complained that American teachers didn't care about content, or that fear of punishment kept them focused on correctness.) It is highly recommended that ESL teachers of students at this level give a "split grade" to reflect recognition of any disjuncture between the two areas of development.

(5) Writing instruction based on audiolingual-type assumptions about the nature of language learning is found to have an inhibitory if not retarding effect on some of the focal students' writing development. The "building-block" philosophy—that writing should proceed from word to phrase to sentence to paragraph to essay—may appeal to the teacher's sense of order and simplicity but has no psychological reality for the students. On the contrary: a student might have to *unlearn* previous knowledge about writing connected discourse in order to conform to the "building-block" patterns drilled in the classroom. This learned "regression" contrasts with the focal students' introspective reports in which content was mentioned as a priority. While the effect on development of connected discourse is not permanent—students are adaptive and learn different norms once they move to a different class—there is no reason to allow it to happen.

The type of process- and meaning-oriented teaching instruction based on authentic material done in Sheltered Core at Cooperville Junior High appears to be a move in the right direction for Chinese immigrant students of this age group, as it does not attempt to force teacher- or grammarian-generated notions of simplicity and linear progress on the students. It is possible that this type of instruction could be started much, much sooner in the ESL program. Granted, ESL program design may not always be a "clean" or "rational" process based on theory and research, and might need to take bureaucratic and personnel constraints into account. However, to the extent that the ELD level at Cooperville embodied a teaching philosophy distinct from that informing the Sheltered Core level, the former would need to be seriously rethought.

(6) On the other hand, the Sheltered Core-type of writing instruction must still address the question of explicit teaching of morphology and syntax. The assignment of a wide range of writing tasks, tapping into a student's different strengths and inclinations, and taking content and purpose into account, is desirable. On the other hand, as shown in Mrs. Garcia's frustration with John Sun, it is difficult to strike a balance between "teaching discourse" and "teaching grammar." Perhaps the entire process of learning "grammar" simply takes longer than two years for most ESL students. But this does not mean that explicit grammar teaching would not do its part to speed up the learning process.

One finding from this study may shed some light on this vast and complex topic. While many of the focal students' errors are shared with speakers of other native languages and could be developmental, some appear to cause particular difficulty for

Chinese speakers and be based at least partially on transfer (e.g.., the existential involving *there* and *have*; the word *born*). To whatever extent possible in an ethnically diverse school with limited resources, targeting—identifying these group-specific errors and concentrating on them (e.g., by using an aide conversant with that native language, or by developing specific tutorial material)—might enhance the effectiveness of grammar teaching.

(7) In the current debate on "English-only" conducted in an anti-immigrant atmosphere, the fear is often expressed that whenever given a chance, an ESL learner would get lazy and "fall back on" his/her native language. The ethnographic observations in this study suggest that extremely high motivation to learn English can coexist with an equally high motivation to associate with fellow Chinese-speakers as a matter of needed psychosocial adjustment. The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, the Language Assessment transcripts indicate that "falling back" is more a matter of individual production strategy rather than a matter of lack of motivation. Also, there is no evidence that better maintenance of Chinese (as in the case of John Sun and Matt Chang) leads to poorer learning of English. Audrey So "fell back" on Chinese from English during the first two Assessments, but she also "fell back" on *bopomofo* phonetic symbols when writing Chinese characters. No other focal students exhibited this pattern of code-switching. Others chose other production strategies, such as neologisms in English (John Sun) or guessing (Martin Zhang).

(8) At the end of two years, all of the focal students made some progress in the four skills, but all were far from exhibiting native-like control of English. Although even the best focal students were not the fastest learners (one student from Shanghai moved to Regular Core within two months of arrival), a slow and steady pace and non-linear development appeared the norm. Granting the reservations about the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* mentioned above, and granting the students' differential performance in various types of writing tasks (e.g., worksheets, personal journals, reading responses, summary), we might hazard the *Intermediate-Mid* and *Intermediate-High* range after two years as a realistic expectation for Chinese immigrant students at the junior high level.